

Will of the Dragon

by emmajayem

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Summary: The dragon war is over, and Berk is slowly being rebuilt. But as Chief Hiccup and his friends soon discover, they aren't the only one's Drago has hurt. Young Naruto bears the scars left by the madman, and it's up to the villagers of Berk to save him. But when a new threat arises from afar, will Naruto become the savior for the island he now calls home?

1. Chapter 1: The Child

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><p>AN: A story that popped into my head after seeing How to Train Your Dragon 2. Feel free to leave comments and constructive criticism. No flames please. Enjoy! ****

****P.S. I would recommend seeing the movie before reading this story. ;)****

* * *

><p>Three long days had passed since the dragon war. Three days of toil and grief for the vikings of Berk. They had lost their beloved chief, Stoick the Vast and their home had been torn apart by the madman, Drago Bludvist. But they were a hearty and stubborn people. Every man, woman, and child contributed to the rebuilding of the tribe. The new chief, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, worked the hardest of all, comforting, advising, and directing his people. The young man still felt the heavy weight of his father's tragic death, a weight that would remain for many years to come. But the former chief's last lesson kept him going.<p>

"Protect your own," the young man murmured as he stood alongside his best friend, surveying the restoration work around them. He was tall and slender, with forest green eyes and a handsome, scholarly face, marked only by an unusual scar on the right side of his chin. He was clad in dark leather armor, emblazoned with a red dragon head on the right shoulder.

"Don't worry, Dad. Toothless and I will take care of them for you." Hiccup glanced at the sleek black dragon beneath him. "All of them. Isn't that right, bud?" Toothless, the Night Fury blinked luminescent harlequin eyes and gave his rider a gummy, draconian smile before taking off into the sky. The two of them soared over the ice-covered island, Toothless' artificial tail flapping in the wind as they manoeuvred. Vikings called their greetings from below as they watched their young chieftain taking care of his duties.

"Hiccup!" A feminine call resounded as another dragon flew up beside them. A blond-haired young woman rode atop the mottled yellow and blue Deadly Nadder. She smiled at Hiccup. "How's the work coming along?" The man shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Well, it's coming, Astrid. Slowly but surely. Have you seen Snotlout and the others?"

"They're helping heft the new roof for the meeting hall."

"Is Eret with them?"

"No, last I saw, he was with Gobber and your mother tending the wounded dragons over at the stables."

"Good. Can you go get 'Lout, 'Legs, Ruff, and Tuff for me? I'll be with Eret, there are a few things I want to ask him." The beautiful viking maiden nodded and flew off. Hiccup sighed tiredly, and ran a hand through his messy, chocolate-brown hair.

"On to the next job...ready bud?" Leaning to the side, the dragon and his rider wound around to the other side of the island, swerving through the entrance of the dragon stables.

A woman looked up from her work as they arrived, wiping off her slender hands and walking towards them with an elegant yet powerful stride. She smoothed back a piece of auburn hair from in front of her celery colored eyes and smiled up at the young dragon trainer.

"Ah, Hiccup! How have the winds been for you, my son?" Hiccup gave a small grin at the special greeting they had shared ever since flying together for the first time at the Dragon Sanctuary.

"Strong as ever, Mom. Those who have been riding them are pretty tired, though." Hiccup's mother, Valka, chuckled and beckoned to her son.

"Come, I just finished drawing up the plans for our new forge. They just need your approval and then I'll send them off the building crew." The young viking nodded and began shuffling through the sheets of parchment.

"Actually, Mom, I was wondering if Eret was around. I need to ask him

something." Valka tilted her head in curiosity.

"Oh? And what might that something be, son?"

"I need to ask Eret a few questions about Drago." His mother's expression turned serious.

"What's worrying you, Hiccup? I may not have been around all these years, but I definitely recognize that tone of voice. It's the same one Stoick used whenever he was brooding over the village's problems."

"I was wondering...what if Drago had other bases besides the main fortress we destroyed?"

"Are you thinking some of his men may still be out there?"

"No, I'm pretty sure they all fled when we defeated Bludvist, though it's better to be safe than sorry. I'm more worried about those traps of his—there may still be a few scattered around that have yet to be destroyed. Also...do you remember how, at times, Toothless was able to block out the alpha Bewilderbeast's call?"

"Aye."

"Well, if Tooth was able to, why not other strong dragons? If Drago came across dragons he couldn't control, he would have only two options. One, remove the problem, meaning kill the dragon. Or two—" Valka's eyes widened in realization

"Keep the dragon captive until it submits—" she whispered in horror.

"Exactly, which is why I need to ask Eret if Drago had any kind of hideout other than his main base."

"That's a good idea, Hiccup. He and Gobber went to check the dragon's food stocks. When Eret gets back we'll tell him."

"Tell me what?" Eret questioned as he strode up beside them, the village's blacksmith in tow.

"Aye, what's got you so worked up, laddie? I only e'er saw such a look on your Dad's face when 'e was thinkin' too hard."

"Ha ha ha, very funny." Hiccup retorted sarcastically at the slight jibe. "Eret, I need to you tell me whether or not Drago had more than one location where he was gathering dragons." The former dragon trapper scratched at his stubbled chin in thought.

"Hmmm. I recall it being mentioned that he had a few of the more stubborn ones tucked away somewhere secret. Don't remember where though. But now that I think about it, there was something odd I once heard him mumbling about."

"What was tha', ole lad?"

"It was along the lines of: 'blasted beast won't break, got to break that rider first.' He had an odd look on his face at the time, too. Almost as though he was worried."

"Could he have been talking about Hiccup or myself?"

"Afraid not, Valka. This was at least a year before he knew anything about Hiccup, and he was definitely grumbling about a dragon already in his possession."

"But that meansâ€¦"

"Aye, Drago must've encountered someone else like yourselves. And if he had the dragonâ€¦"

"He probably had the riderâ€¦" Hiccup closed his eyes as he spoke, dread clenching in the pit of his stomach.

"It's been a full three days since the battle, but it may have been even longer since Drago had been to that hideout. There's no guarantee that we'll find anything, but it's worth a look."

"Hiccup, don' ya think it's a bit early in your chieffin' to go off wanderin' some more?"

"I already thought of that, Gobber. Astrid is gathering the other dragon trainers even as we speak. I plan on sending them out in groups to fly around our part of the Archipelago and see if they spot anything unusual." The four of them waited for a short while longer, before Astrid, Snotlout, Fishlegs, and the twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut flew in. Hiccup quickly explained his theory and gave them instructions.

"Just do a fly by. See if there are any obvious signs of activity, whether it's dragons or humans. Don't land, just mark it on the map and head to the next area."

"Why can't we check it out ourselves?" Hiccup sighed.

"Astrid, we don't know how many of Drago's followers are out there. Neither do we know how they would react to seeing our riders."

"What if we find dragons in the traps?" Fishlegs questioned, giving his Gronkle, Meatlug, a gentle pat.

"Leave them alone. They'll likely be those Drago couldn't control and was forced to leave behind during the invasion. Expect them to be scared, hungry, and aggressive. I don't want any of you getting hurt trying to free them. That will be a job for me and Toothless, since he's the new alpha." Hiccup pulled a map from the leather pouch on his wrist guard, laying it out on the ground in front of them.

"Astrid, you take the twins and check out the areas between here and Drago's fortress. Fishlegs, take Snotlout and scout from Berk to the Dragon Sanctuary. Then all of you double back and report anything unusual you've seen."

"On it!" the twins yelled in unison, not bothering to stay for any further instruction. Astrid groaned and rolled her sky colored eyes.

"I'll make sure they don't destroy anything too important," she

yelled, taking off after them. Snotlout and Fishlegs left as well, in a different direction. Hiccup groaned tiredly, moving his neck from side to side in an effort to relieve his sore muscles.

"Well," he turned to his mother. "I have more to do so I will see you later, when the riders get back. Let me know if you need anything."

"Actually, I do." Valka gestured to the forgotten forge plans with a sly grin. Her son rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

"Er, rightâ€|"

* * *

><p>It was only a few hours before Astrid and the others had returned.<p>

"Hiccup! We found something I think you should see," the lovely young woman called as the dragon riders all landed. Hiccup grunted as he helped to place the last roof board of a hut, before turning and climbing back down.

"You weren't gone long. Did you find the hideout Eret mentioned?"

"Yes, but that's not all. Hiccup, there were traps all over it, and what looked like a massive cage. As soon as we got close, the whole thing began shaking like crazy and there was this terrible roar. It was unlike anything I'd ever heard before!" Hiccup paled slightly at her description.

"Right," he glanced at the five of them. "Do you guys think your dragons are up for another flight?" Snotlout scoffed, folding thick arms across his wide chest.

"Well, duh. Hookfang could fly all day, no problem! Isn't that right, Hookfang?" The red and black Monstrous Nightmare huffed loudly at its rider, blowing thick smoke from its nostrils. Hiccup rolled his eyes.

"I'll take that as a yes. Toothless!" The Night Fury looked up from his perch at a dragon feeding station. "Ready to go flying, bud?" Toothless wriggled happily in reply, iridescent scales flashing in the sunlight. The young chief settled himself in the saddle, locking his prosthetic leg into the control mechanism for his dragon's tailfin. He gave a nod to the others.

"Let's go." With that, the six of them took off, circling the island once before making their way to Drago's abandoned hideout. Unaware of just what they would find there, and how it would forever change their lives.

* * *

><p>It didn't take long for the six dragon riders to reach the small, abandoned hideout nestled in the small cliffs of an outlying island. As they circled, Toothless began sniffing the air intently, a deep rumbling emanating from within his throat. Hiccup felt a shiver run down his spine as he glanced over the decrepit structure barely

clinging to the steep rock. Various styles of traps and war machines littered the main area which was surrounded by a high wooden wall. At the very center stood a massive cage, its interior shadowed in darkness giving an unearthly feel to the place.<p>

"Astrid, you said that there was movement in the cage the first time you flew by?"

"Yes, but there isn't now. That's strange..."

"Hey, Hiccup. You don't think it could be like that Screaming Death, do you?" The viking chieftain turned to his fellow dragon expert, a large yet gentle young man wearing a vest and tunic of thick fur, along with a small helmet covering his short blond hair.

"Hmm...maybe, Fishlegs. The size is about right. Alright guys, find a safe spot to land and head to the big cage. Just stay quiet, and keep an eye out for anything that seems out of place." Alighting carefully between the dragon traps, the vikings began exploring the outpost. Hiding behind the half-finished structure of a catapult, they peered over at the massive cage.

"See anything?" Hiccup whispered.

"No...I don't think so-" Astrid began before being interrupted by Fishlegs who quietly called out in a nervous tone.

"There! I think I just saw a tail for a second."

"Details?"

"Kind of a red-orange, long, with some sort of fin towards the end. Not enough for a proper identification."

"Okay, all of you stay here while I go on ahead with Toothless."

"Hiccup-"

"No, Astrid. Toothless is the alpha now. If anyone can handle this, it's him, and I need to be there too." The warrior maiden nodded, displeased but understanding of the situation. Wary of their footing, both dragon and rider began slowly making their way forward, freezing at the slightest sound or movement within the cage.

Before they had even covered half the distance, a low, blood-chilling growl cut through the eerie silence. The Night Fury immediately let out a reverberating call of his own. The two sounds competing in a hair-raising symphony, growing in volume until Toothless gave a sudden deafening shriek, overpowering his contender. Hiccup let out a breath he had unknowingly been holding, relieved that his dragon had managed to establish some form of understanding with the imprisoned creature.

"Good work, bud." Hiccup motioned for the others to move forward before turning back to his dragon.

"Think you could get it to come out more, Toothless?" Said creature replied by letting out a softer, almost coaxing bark, his ears alert

and posture relaxed. All was quiet for a moment until a drawn out huff came from within the cage. Toothless stiffened at this, releasing a displeased hiss followed by a commanding roar. Finally, the dragon within the cage began to move forward. The viking's mouths fell open in wide-eyed wonder at the sight before them.

The dragon was a beautiful red-orange like that of a sunset, dark and rusty hued in some areas, and brilliantly vivid in others. Four thick and powerful legs ended in perfectly sharp and lethal claws. Its body was long and lithe, snake-like and muscular. Two long ears, similar to the Night Fury's twitched at each little sound, lined in a ribbon of black which extended down over blood-red eyes. It's head was long and pointed, ending in a whiskered snout bearing long, snarling teeth. Two massive wings lay tucked against its side, covered in thick armored scales, the same color as the rest of its body. A wicked black claw adorned the very tip of each which extended to raven-hued ribbing along the wing membranes. The most startling feature on the dragon, however, were its tails. A total of nine in number, each flowing purposefully in a graceful dance; thin, with a rippling fin along the end. The dragon riders stood in awe until Hiccup broke the reverent silence

"Incredible," he began in a hushed whisper, before his voice grew in volume and excitement. "L-look at the size of this thing, it's easily as long as the old alpha! Just more slender, streamlined even." Berk's chief moved around to the front of the creature to study its face.

"And the snout, it's unlike anything I've ever seen before! It makes it look almost... fox-like," Hiccup mused, holding his chin. Snotlout snorted loudly.

"Yeah right. Oh look there! It's a massive nine tailed fox coming to eat us! Oh no, run away!" The brash viking cackled as he threw his hands in the air in mock fright.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Laugh all you want, 'Lout. But I'm serious. Have you ever seen a dragon like this?"

"...well, no but-

"Exactly! Which is why we have to be careful. There's no telling what this one can do!"

"Maybe it shoots massive balls of light out of its jaws!"

"Or maybe it has some sort of evil energy powers!"

"Hehe! Yeah, or maybe it-

"Ruff! Tuff! That's enough. You can speculate on it later, now we need to get it free from this trap and..." Hiccup trailed off, a puzzled look on his face.

"And?..." Astrid prompted.

"Shh...did you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"That knocking sound- there it is again!" Hiccup hissed, glancing around. The six of them stood quietly, waiting. The strange noise continued before a quiet, hoarse voice followed.

"Tasukete. Shite kudasai." They all reacted purely out of instinct, bolting towards the source of the child-like sound. Running down the wooden walkway before wrenching open the single, locked door. Upon rushing inside, their worst fears were confirmed. A boy, no older than eight, sat huddled in the far corner of the room. Manacles were locked around each of his wrists and neck, along with iron chains wrapped around his ankles and middle. The child looked at them in near terror through filthy blond bangs, but they could see the stunning cerulean blue of his eyes.

"A-Astrid," Hiccup managed to stutter out. The young woman nodded, understanding what he was requesting of her. Slowly, carefully, she crept towards the child, whose eyes went wide at the movement.

"Ch-chigau! Chigau! Watashi o kizutsukenaide k-kudasai!" Astrid's brow furrowed in thought, trying to think of a way to calm the boy. She sat on the floor a short ways from the panicking child and held her hands in a placating gesture.

"I'm not going to hurt you, uh...No hurt? Help you?" She motioned with her hands and arms attempting to convey what she meant. The boy paused at her soft tone and looked at her with an intense gaze, as if evaluating if she posed a threat.

"N-nani?"

"Erm...oh, I am Astrid. Astrid." she spoke, pointing to herself and repeating her name several times.

"A...Asto...Astrido?"

"Yeah, I'm Astrid. ?" The child moved his face slightly to the side in an innocent manner, understanding the question after a momentary pause. Though apparently reluctant, he eventually gave an answer.

"N-naruto."

"Naruto? Your name is Naruto?"

"Hai," he replied, nodding his head.

"Er...oh, can we, uh, free you?" She asked, pointing to the shackles and chains binding him.

"Eh?" Astrid tried again, acting out the motions of unlocking the manacles.

"Free you?" A sudden, albeit miniscule spark of hope was lit in the tiny child's eyes. Shakily, he held out his wrists. Astrid smiled gently at the show of trust.

"Yes, that's it. Don't worry. You're safe now. Safe?"

"S-sÅ"fu?"

"Yes, er..._Hai_. Uh, _sÅ"fu_."

That one word caused the child to burst into tears, sobbing into his chained arms. Fishlegs moved forward immediately, making quick work of the locks with a small hunting knife. Astrid lightly touched the frail boy's arm, causing him to look up sharply, fully showing his face to them for the first time. It was their turn to gasp as they took stock of the sight before them. Bruises were scattered here and there, along with trails of dried blood. Cracked and swollen lips trembled. To top it all off, three whisker-like scars marred each nearly emaciated cheek.

The sight tugged at their hearts, and each wished to somehow comfort the child, but feared to scare him further. However, the boy, Naruto, showed his inner strength to them by quickly drying his own tears and gaining growing confidence in his newfound freedom.

"ArigatÅ•, eh," the child scrunched his nose slightly in a manner that Hiccup and Astrid couldn't help but find adorable. _"Onamae wa?"_

"Uhâ€|"

"Etsu? Ne Naruto," the frail boy placed a palm on his chest. _"Anata wa, Astrido."_ He moved his hand to point first at Astrid, then towards Hiccup as he continued. _"Anata?"_

"Oh, I'm Hiccup, uh, Hiccup?"

"Hicca?"

"Close enough, I guess." The child smiled slightly.

"ArigatÅ•, Hicca-san." Naruto's crystal blue eyes suddenly grew enormous and he let out a sharp gasp.

"Kurama?! Doko ni aru no Kurama? Doko ryÅ«desu?!" The tiny boy attempted to stand, but gave an instantaneous shout of pain as his legs collapsed beneath him.

In reply to the pained cry, a ferocious roar shook the entire platform and chilled the blood of all but the blue-eyed child, whose expression grew to one of joy. Understanding hit Astrid like a thunderbolt from Thor himself.

"Hiccup! The dragon!" The chieftain nodded, stepping forward slowly. The child watched him through pain clouded eyes as he knelt a short distance away.

"Naruto?" The boy nodded. Hiccup pointed to the doorway, then made the motion of carrying the child.

"Kurama? Take you to Kurama?" The chief held out a hand to Naruto, who shied away slightly. Hiccup gave him a small smile, before closing his eyes and letting his head turn away. The others watched as the cerulean eyes widened in surprise and astonishment, until a tiny, frail hand was placed carefully in the young man's gently grasp.

"Hicca-san," the child whispered. "Kurama? Naruto?" Hiccup nodded before smoothly scooping the frail child into his arms, careful not to jostle his obvious wounds or apparently pained leg. Naruto froze momentarily at the contact, before sinking slightly into the warm embrace. As they moved up the rickety ladder, the boy casting one fleeting glance at the bloody chains before shivering and turning forward once more. The moment Naruto's head was within sight of the great dragon, it began to thrash wildly in its restraints

"Kurama!" Everything stilled as child and dragon stared at each other intently, red eyes locked with blue ones. Motioning to be let down, Naruto was gently set on the ground directly in front of the cage.

"Sore wa daijÅ•budesu, Kurama. Karera wa sutekida. Watashitachiha genchi harai." The dragon remained still and silent as they made quick work of the trap and mechanism. Once freed however, he immediately bounded towards the boy, enormous body curling around him in protective coils. The dragon glared and huffed at the six vikings, until the blond-haired child patted his snout.

"Kurama, Teishi shite kudasai." Kurama glance between the two before lovingly licking the boy and relaxing slightly. Hiccup took a single step forward, motioning for the others to stay.

"Kurama," the young man slowly raised his hand, palm facing out. The foreign dragon seemed to analyze him for a moment, before nodding his enormous flame colored head. Bending down until the very tip of his nose brushed against Hiccup's hand.

* * *

><p>Translations: (Japanese-English)

"Tasukete. Shite kudasai." - "Please. Help me."

"Ch-chigau! Chigau! Watashi o kizutsukenaide k-kudasai!" - "N-no! No! Don't hurt me!"

"N-nani?" - "W-what?"

"Hai," - "Yes."

"SÅ"fu?" - "Safe?"

"ArigatÅ•, eh, onamae wa?" - "Thank you, uh, what is your name?"

"Etsu? Ne Naruto. " - "Eh? I'm Naruto."

"Anata wa Astrido." - "You are Astrid."

"Anata?" - "You?"

"ArigatÅ•, Hicca-san." - "Thank you, Mr. Hiccup"

"Kurama?! Doko ni aru no Kurama? Doko ryÅ«desu?!" - "Kurama?! Where is Kurama?! Where is my dragon?!"

"Sore wa daijÅ•budesu, Kurama. Karera wa sutekida. Watashitachiha genchi harai." - "Don't worry, Kurama. They're nice. Let us help you.

"Kurama, Teishi shite kudasai." - "Kurama, please stop."

2. Chapter 2: Return of the Chief

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><p>AN: Thank you to everyone who has read, reviewed, followed, favorited, commented on, and critiqued my story! You are all amazing! **Reviews, constructive criticism and ideas are welcome. No flames please.****

* * *

><p>Both humans and dragons remained frozen, transfixed as Hiccup stood with his hand resting on the fearsome dragon. Kurama held the connection for another moment before pulling away, giving a slight huff that engulfed the vikings in a warm wreath of air. Hiccup smiled, recalling a similar occurrence with Toothless all those years ago.<p>

The chieftain turned back to the boy, still held close within the dragon's enormous coils. Now that the initial rush of freedom had worn off, the child was clearly near the point of collapse. Hiccup nodded to himself, his decision made.

"We need to get them to Berk." The young man began rummaging through the Night Fury's saddlebag, watching from the corner of his eye as Kurama cradled the ever weaken youth.

"Naruto," he called, finding the item he was after. He displayed the thick, fur wrap to Naruto before offering it to him. The boy hesitated, but upon feeling the softness of the cloak he immediately pulled it around his battered self, burrowing into its layered warmth.

It was difficult to convey their message, but eventually the former prisoners understood the viking's desire to bring them both back to the village. Soon, Naruto was securely settled on Toothless' back, although Kurama watched their every movement with his eyes narrowed in an unwavering gaze. The sunset colored dragon had growled menacingly when the boy left his protective embrace, but quickly calmed down after a sharp sound from the newly name alpha.

The viking chief enjoyed the look of curious wonderment that was upon the youth's face as he gazed at the different dragons. He was obviously used to the creatures, being neither intimidated nor worried. If anything, he seemed more relaxed in their presence, and the scholar couldn't help but question what, if anything, his life's experience held beyond Drago's walls. Sitting behind the frail child, Hiccup locked his prosthetic into place then gave a nod to his dragon

riders.

"The moment we reach the village each of you has a task. Astrid, you and Fishlegs are in charge of Kurama. Keep him in open areas, away from the main village, because even an accidental swipe of those tails could bring down the huts. Snotlout, you go and find Gothi, tell her it's an emergency. Ruff, Tuff both of you go and find my mother, Eret, and Gobber then meet up at Gothi's home. Think you can handle that?"

"Psh! Come on, Hiccup? It's me we're talking about, I can handle anything!" Snotlout boasted, flexing his arms and trying to look intimidating.

"Wait, so who do we find again?"

"His mother, idiot!"

"Along with Eret and Gobber, please try to remember, you two." Hiccup sighed.

"Fine," the twins chorused.

"I'll try to stay as close to Kurama as I can. All of you form a circle around us." The leather clad viking locked eyes with the mysterious dragon, a silent agreement being reached.

"Let's go."

* * *

><p>By the time they reached the village Naruto had lost consciousness, greatly worrying Hiccup and surprisingly, Astrid as well. The villagers had immediately begun gathering upon sighting their new leader, gaping in awe at the massive dragon flying beside him. The group split, moving to carry out their preassigned duties. Managing to find an open field Astrid, Fishlegs, and Hiccup coaxed Kurama into landing. Fishlegs nervously glanced between Hiccup and the strange dragon.<p>

"How are we going to get him to stay here while you take Naruto to Gothi's?"

"I've asked myself the same question. Naruto is in bad shape, so we'll need to hurry." He gazed around, finding one of the outlying feeding stations.

"Maybe we could-" He stopped as Kurama suddenly moved forward. He brought his vulpine-like snout close to the bundle in Hiccup's arms giving it a gentle sniff, then bent his head until chieftain and dragon were eye to eye. Hiccup knew the power a dragon's eye held. It was a viewing into their innermost self, a pure expression of their hearts and minds. He could clearly see what the dragon was trying to say. I trust you. Take care of him, or elseâ€¦ The unspoken threat was there, as was the implicit trust. Hiccup bowed his head slightly in return, recalling some of the words he heard Naruto speak earlier.

"_Hai_. Naruto...er, _sÄ"fu_." It was apparently the correct thing to say, because Kurama's body relaxed slightly and he strode off towards

the feeding platform without another sound. Astrid and Fishlegs had watched the exchange with trepidation until Hiccup gave them a quick nod before taking off once more, leaving them to mind the, now content, dragon.

With several beats of his bat-like wings, Toothless arrived at Gothi's house, high on the hillside above Berk's main center. Snotlout along with Ruffnut and Tuffnut were already there, still astride their dragons.

"How's that Mr. think-you-can-handle-that? They're all inside waiting for you!"

"Thanks, Snotlout. You too, Ruff, Tuff. I'll handle it from here. Go ahead and help the other's with Kurama." Without another word the chieftain rushed into the hut, clutching his motionless burden. The villager healer, Gothi; his mother; the blacksmith, Gobber, and Eret were all inside, eager to know what was going on. Hiccup simply pulled back a portion of the fur covering, exposing filthy and blood-matted blond hair. A chorus of gasps sounded out.

"It turns out dragons weren't the only ones Bludvist enslaved." The other's gaped in horror, knowing instinctively that such a small frame could only belong to a child. Gothi, however, swiftly began the business of unwrapping and preparing her patient. Bruises, dried blood, and all manner of filth were carefully washed away with herbal water before the wounds were wrapped, and in some areas stitched together. Hiccup felt anger rising within him at being able to count each one of the child's ribs, and at how there seemed to be nothing but skin left to hold everything together.

Valka laid a calming hand on her son's tense shoulders, assuring him with her presence. He momentarily wished to embrace her in return, until he remembered the blood still covering his hands and clothing.

"Hiccup. Chief?" Gobber hesitantly spoke. "The village'll be anxious ta' know what's goin' on. What'll we tell 'em?" Hiccup looked over at the now sleeping boy being carefully tucked into Gothi's small bed. He sighed, knowing what he had to do.

"I'll address them, just call everyone to gather in the new Mead Hall. Mom, can you stay here and help Gothi?"

"Of course, son. Ya'd better change your clothes and get in a quick wash before the meetin', though." Hiccup agreed.

"Gobber, Eret, Toothless and I will meet you there, please keep everyone calm until we arrive."

"Aye, chief!"

* * *

><p>Hiccup stood before the large, newly carved doors of the rebuilt Hall. Bracing himself for the meeting he was about to enter. He had only been chief for three days, after all. Unwillingly, too. But this was the legacy left to him by his late father. An inheritance he planned to cherish despite all of its harsh realities. The young man exhaled slowly, organizing and composing his thoughts.<p>

"I can do this," was whispered to the cool breeze before he pushed open the heavy wooden doors. Raucous shouts, music, and the strong scents of ale, tallow and sweat hit his senses in a dizzying array. Vikings sat at tables eating and drinking their fill, huddled over the main fire, or walking about the large room. The feeling of easy comfort quickly disappeared from the air, however, as the majority spotted Hiccup.

"Chief! There ya' are! Wha's this news everyone's been talkin' 'bout?"

"Aye, chief. The meetin' fer?"

"Hiccup, lad. You doin' alrigh'?"

"Lookin' a might peaky if'n ya ask me."

"Well I was'na askin' yew!"

"Oy! No need 'ta be angry!"

"Pipe down, all a ya, an' listen ta yer chief!"

"But 'es jus' standin' there lookin-" A shrill, piercing whistle cut through the gruff arguments and shouts like a blade, and Hiccup's shoulders sagged in relief. Gobber stood near the main bonfire, fingers still hovering near his mouth.

"Alrigh' ya jackanapes! Stow ya gab an' listen ta the chief! Let 'im explain wha's goin on, and then ye can ask yer bloody questions!"

"Er, thank you, Gobber...I think," he turned to the gathered villagers, his villagers, his people. Hiccup sent a silent plea to the gods for success in his endeavor. "Everyone, as you know, I recently returned with the other dragon riders from. I'm sure you also know that we didn't come back alone. During our flight we found an abandoned outpost, belonging to Drago Bludvist." Angry cries broke out at the name, and it was several minutes before they quieted down again.

"As I was saying, the outpost was abandoned but it was not, however, empty. We rescued two prisoners from there. One was a dragon, one of the largest I've ever seen. It's likely that Drago simply couldn't control it and was forced to instead detain it there. The other captive, though, wasn't a dragon at all." Hiccup could feel emotion gathering within his chest and throat.

"It was a human, a...a child." Stunned silence rang throughout the hall, and the chief continued before any noise could interrupt him once again. "The child, a young boy, is currently with Gothi. She will tend to his wounds and hopefully restore him to full health."

"Hiccup," Gobber spoke out. "Is 'e from one 'o' the other tribes?"

"As far as I can tell? No. He doesn't seem to speak any form of our language. And no, it isn't latin either. He's obviously neither a

vikings nor a roman. It wasn't easy, but we've established a level of communication with him that should soon provide further answers. I ask all of you to leave Gothi and the boy, along with the dragon, alone. I don't want to risk any incidents until we know the whole story. That is all, Eret, I need to speak with you, the rest of you can return to your work."

Hiccup sat heavily on nearby bench as the crowd dispersed. Leaving only Eret and Gobber with him in the Hall. Eret's face held a look of increasing displeasure.

"I had an idea of what Drago might have at that outpost...but never...never a child!"

"A madman, tha's what 'e was!"

"I think we've already established what Drago's state of mind was. The real question now is how did it happen? How did Naruto end up as Bludvist's prisoner?"

"Naru-wha?"

"Naruto. That's the boy's name, and the dragon is Kurama."

"Odd soundin' names if'n ya ask me."

"For us, maybe. But that's more likely due to them being foreign."

"Yeah, but just how foreign are we talkin' about?"

"That, I don't know. We've explored so little outside of the Archipelago. we know the Romans are to the South, and to the West there's miles of open ocean. That just leaves the East."

"But 'iccup, we've all heard tales of what ta' the East! It's supposed ta' be full of all manner 'o' creatures and strange happenin's. Those who go East...never return."

"But why? Think about it. None but the vikings have dared to settle the Archipelago. It's a harsh and unforgiving place to live, yet we're here anyways. Is it so hard to imagine that another people has dared, at one point or another, to conquer the unknown East?" They could think of no reply to that, and the three men sat together in silence for several minutes, each wrapped in his own thoughts. Their musing was broken by Valka entering. Hiccup sat upright immediately, eager for news from Gothi. His mother smiled at him gently.

"The boy's awake."

* * *

><p>Floating in darkness, that is how Naruto would describe his current situation. Endless and unchanging emptiness. He'd experienced this before, on numerous occasions, yet this time seemed different. There was a sense of safety and peace, instead of the usual dread of awakening. As though he subconsciously knew there was nothing to fear in the world outside his mind. But that would be impossible, for wouldn't he open his eyes to find that terrifying man glaring down at him? He would begin growling out unintelligible words, shaking his

fist in anger. Of course the boy couldn't answer, being unable to give any manner of satisfactory reply. Acknowledging the dark clothed man only brought pain, but refusing him brought about the same results in the end.<p>

A picture flashed through the blackness of a tall, kind looking man holding out a hand, a gentle smile gracing his face. Who was this? Never in his life did he meet such a man. Or, did he? A second moment of color streaked by, this time of large green eyes that seemed to glow with intelligence and life. How could this be? How could these two brief sights seem so foreign and yet familiar at the same time? More images assaulted Naruto's mind: bloody shackles and chains, a dark room, a door slamming open, a woman with pale blond hair, leather clad arms carrying him, Kurama thrashing about in a cage, a sleek black dragon looking at him in happiness as the boy sat on its back. Then a name came to him, Astrid, followed by another, Hiccup.

Suddenly, the veil seemed to fall away from his mind and Naruto began to sense his surroundings. Something soft and furry covered him in warmth, the scent of herbs and woodsmoke tickled his nose, and his back lay against something slightly lumpy but not altogether uncomfortable. Then came the sounds. Someone spoke with that same twisting, guttural speech as before, but this time in an elegant female voice. It seemed a monumental effort, but the child eventually managed to open his startingly blue eyes.

The world was blurry and he blinked several times. Things began come into focus slowly, and the boy realized he was tucked carefully into someone's small bed and wrapped in thick animal skins. Looking around he saw a fire blazing in a hearth and dried herbs hung from the ceiling. Movement caught his attention and he glanced over to see two women working at a table in the far corner. One was tall and slender, with auburn hair braided and hanging down her back. The other was very small, around Naruto's height, with silver-gray hair and a staff in one hand.

Naruto froze, fear clutching at his heart and tearing into his stomach. he tried to bite back the whimper forming in his throat, but it escaped. The small sound was clearly heard in the quiet hut, and the taller women swiftly took notice and turned towards him.

"Gothi," she spoke. _"Guttens vÃ¥ken."_ The woman smiled at him, and he noticed just how greatly she resembled the brown-haired man from his memories.

"Hvordan fÃ¥ler du deg, barn?" When he didn't reply she frowned slightly, carefully watching his frightened face.

"Tis en forferdelig forbrytelse for en sÃ¥ ung som du har blitt behandlet sÃ¥ grusomt." She murmured the words quietly to herself in a soothing tone. Naruto stared, the same feeling of calm and comfort that he had felt in the presence of the brown-haired man, Hiccup, he believed his name was, had returned. That is when he noticed the similarities between the two. The soft tone, the kind green eyes, the gentle smile. The boy thought to himself that, perhaps, if he could have trusted the man who rescued him, he could trust her. Naruto allowed his lips to turn up at the corners ever so slightly.

"H-hello," he whispered. A look of relief washed over the woman's face. She then held up a slim hand, pointing to herself.

"Valka. Jeg er Valka." Naruto recalled the phrase being said by Hiccup, and the blond-haired woman, Astrid. He raised a small hand towards her.

"V-vaka?" he asked, having difficulty forming the sounds correctly. She nodded.

"Ja, mitt navn er Valka, og dette er Gothi. Gothi." Valka gestured to the shorter woman.

"G-goti?"

"NÅ|r nok." Valka stood from where she had knelt at Naruto's bedside. _"Hiccup? Husker du, Hiccup?"_ The boy perked up slightly at the name, and Valka pointed first at herself, then the door. _"Jeg henter Hiccup. Valka fÅ¥ Hiccup. ForstÅ¥r?"_

"Vaka...Hiccup?"

"Ja. God gutten, jeg vil vÅ|re tilbake snart." He watched as she strode out the door, leaving him alone with the still silent Gothi.

"Um...hi." Gothi smiled, but said nothing. The hut was silent except for the crackling of the fire for several moments.

"So...you, um...help people feel better? Uh, a healer?" He questioned, pointing at the hanging herbs. She glanced at them, then nodded then gestured down towards Naruto's body. The blond child tilted his head to the side and looked. He blinked in surprise, barely noticing the numerous bandages which covered him. He examined his carefully wrapped wrists before lifting the fur blanket slightly. The child gasped softly at seeing the stiff braces on each bone-thin leg. He moved wide eyes to stare at the healer.

"You helped me?" Again, she spoke no words, only raising her head in affirmation. Naruto felt tears prick at the corner of his eyes. It had seemed forever ago that someone cared for him, helped him, healed him. He couldn't remember how long he had been with that man. Drago, the name sent shivers down his back and he winced at the pain caused by the sharp movement. The child was glad that the bandages covered nearly every portion of his skin, he didn't want to see the bruises and cuts. He didn't want to remember what he had seen and felt.

The door suddenly opened, wrenching him from his dark thoughts. A familiar face peeked around the doorframe and Naruto couldn't help the full smile that bloomed across his lips.

"Mr. Hiccup." The man returned his grin.

"Naruto."

* * *

><p> Translations:

"Gothi, guttens v  ken." - "Gothi, the lad's awake."

"Hvordan f  ler du deg, barn?" - "How are you feeling, child?"

"Tis en forferdelig forbrytelse for en s   ung som du har blitt behandlet s   grusomt." - "Tis a terrible crime for one as young as you to have been treated so cruelly."

"Valka. Jeg er Valka." - "Valka. I am Valka."

"Ja, mitt navn er Valka, og dette er Gothi." - "Yes, my name is Valka, and this is Gothi."

"N  r nok." - "Close enough."

3. Chapter 3: The Unknown East

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><p>AN: **

Thank you to everyone who's read, reviewed, favorited, and followed my story! Feel free to send me any ideas, comments, or pieces of constructive criticism!

* * *

><p>Seeing the boy awake and smiling filled Hiccup's heart with warmth, the words he spoke moved it to overflowing.<p>

"Hicca-san"

"Naruto" The smile suddenly fell from the child's face, replaced by a look of fear as he stared over Hiccup's shoulder. The chief looked to see that both Eret and Gobber had entered behind him.

"Glad ta see ye awake, laddie!" Gobber failed to notice the boy flinch at his booming voice, Hiccup however, did. He quickly ushered the two large vikings back out the door, despite their protests.

"Hiccup, what're ye doin'?"

"Couldn't you see? He was scared of you!"

"But why, chief?" Hiccup sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"It's your size, Eret. You both have the classic viking body, unlike me. I have the same physique as Naruto does."

"Aye, yer both small, lanky, an' not very viking-like."

"Thanks for summing that up, Gobber. But anyways, think about why Naruto would be scared of you two. Who do you think you remind him of?" Eret clenched his jaw in understanding.

"Dragoâ€¦"

"Exactly, but unlike you, Drago was nothing short of a madman. Thus, the boy's fear."

"So what'll ye do, 'iccup?"

"Until the situation changes only myself, Mom, Gothi, and Astrid will be allowed near Naruto. I'd like to get him moved to my home by tonight, he can stay there until he's fully healed."

"Why Astrid?"

"When we first found him he seemed fairly comfortable around her. Another familiar face would do him good. She actually became sort of...I don't know, motherly towards him at some point." Gobber laughed.

"An' so it's begun. Watch out, 'iccup. Pretty soon she'll be wantin' little babes of 'er own!" The brunette blushed a deep red at that comment.

"G-Gobber!" The blacksmith slapped him soundly on the back.

"Ye'd better get back in there. We'll go find Astrid an' let 'er know the plan." Still flushed, Hiccup nodded and retreated into the hut. Naruto looked up sharply as he entered, before relaxing upon seeing who it was.

"Hicca-san, eh, gomen'nasai. K-karera wa watashi o kowagara seta." Despite not understanding the boy's words, Hiccup recognized the look of apologetic embarrassment on his face. He held up a hand in a calming gesture.

"It's alright. It'll just be us. Erm...only me, Mom and Gothi." He pointed to each of them in turn as he spoke. The child blinked for a moment before nodding.

"Hicca-san, Vakka-san, to Goti-san?"

"Uh, yeah." Hiccup turned to Gothi.

"Is he ready to be moved to my home yet?" The healer dipped her head in affirmation. "Then let's get going, it's starting to get late and I would like him to be settled by evening." The two women began preparing the boy as he looked on in confusion. He seemed calm enough, but Hiccup could see the slight stiffness to the child's shoulders. The viking placed a gentle hand on Naruto's own, and he flinched briefly at the contact.

"Naruto," the chieftain whispered quietly.

"H-hai?" Hiccup smiled at him in the same way he would for a frightened dragon. The effect was instantaneous, the boy relaxed and returned his grin, assured as to his safety.

"Arigatou, Hicca-san."

* * *

><p>Half an hour later, Naruto was tucked happily in Hiccup's own small bed, petting contentedly at the soft fur blankets. The three vikings were glad that the child was so easily satisfied, yet unhappy that such a simple thing as a warm bed could give him so much comfort. They all looked up as the bedroom door creaked open. Astrid walked in, her long blond hair still pulled to the side in a braid, with loose bangs framing either side of her face. Naruto stared at the fur clad maiden for a moment, before his eyes widened in recognition.<p>

"Asta-Astri-Astrido-san?" Astrid blinked in surprise.

"He remembers me?"

"Apparently, I think he...what is he doing?" The boy was trying to scoot forward on the bed, despite his immobile legs. His eyes remained fixed on Astrid as he stretched out a hand. The shieldmaiden walked forward slowly and sat down beside the child. Almost reverently, Naruto reached up a hand and touched the large fur cape and hood on her shoulders. Hiccup stifled a laugh at the expression of wonderment on the boy's face and the look of bewilderment on Astrid's.

"He really likes soft things." The blond maiden grinned at that, and in a single motions swept off her cape and placed it around the child. Despite being thin herself, the fur absolutely dwarfed the tiny youth, but he didn't seem to mind. Naruto gave a small cry of joy and began rubbing his cheek against the fuzzy hide.

"Back ya go, lad." Valka gingerly pulled him back onto the pillows and once again pulled the blankets around him. Astrid looked on as she did.

"He sure seems to recover quicklyâ€|"

"Yeah, although he still get's scared easily. You should have seen his reaction to Gobber and Eret."

"What happened?"

"It was like being in that outpost prison all over again."

"But, why only them? He seems fine enough with us."

"I think there are two reasons for this; one, he seems to trust women more readily than men, which considering his time with that madman isn't so surprising, second, we're...er...smaller."

"Hiccupâ€|"

"Ouch! I didn't mean it like that, Astrid! Why do women have such sharp elbows?" He murmured the last part under his breath before continuing. "Bludvist was tall, big, and mean. We all are much smaller than him. Naruto doesn't seem to like loud voices either, Gobber's nearly made him come unglued."

"I guess that makes sense...He seems to understand us fairly well."

"Kind of. He's pretty good at reading people's intentions, a skill I'm not so sure an eight year old should already have. It says a lot about what the boy has gone through. But, when it comes to any kind of language...let's just say that progress is pretty slow."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know, he's able to understand some things, but not much. So far all I've been able to do is point to something and tell him the word for it and then he'll do the same."

"Well, that's a start."

"Yeah, but I wish I could think of some way to really connect with...him!" Astrid blinked in surprise as he trailed off. She noticed the look of shock on his face as he stared behind her. The viking maiden turned to find what had made him pause. She started at what she saw. Naruto was laying in the bed, a sketchbook in hand that Valka had given him from Hiccup's stash. The boy had a charcoal pencil and was drawing on the parchment. It was the artwork, however, that amazed them both. With only a few short lines, Naruto had captured Kurama in all his glory. The sketch was both simple and ornate, with wonderful detail and life. The child's face held an expression of pure serenity and happiness as he continued to work on his drawing.

"That's it!" Hiccup whispered in excitement.

"What's it?"

"A way to communicate with him!" Hiccup walked over to the boy, pulling out his own notebook and map.

"Naruto," he knelt by the bed and pointed to the sketch. "Kurama?" The child's smile widened and he nodded emphatically. The chieftain spread out the map on the blanket and set one of his own drawings on top. Naruto gasped at seeing a likeness of the saddled Night Fury.

"KokuryÅ«-chan!" Hiccup grinned, despite being unable to understand the words spoken.

"Toothless," he replied, pointing at the sketch. The blond child tilted his head in confusion, and if Hiccup hadn't known better, he would've thought he'd heard a small coo come from Astrid. The viking shook the thought from his head.

"Toothless," he repeated.

"Tuu...Tuue...Tuuess...eh, Tuus-chan?"

"I guess that will work." He gestured once again to the parchment.

"Toothless," he then pointed at the map, more specifically, Berk's location on said

map."

"Berk."

"Bik?"

"Berk."

"Bi...Biii-eeerk...Biii-eeerk"|...Bik?" Hiccup groaned in frustration and Astrid clamped a hand over her mouth to hide a laugh.

"Sure, whatever. Berk?"

"Bik," Naruto used his finger to trace a circle around the island. _"Bik?"_ The chieftain nodded. Once again, the child gestured to a the map, this time at the whole Archipelago. _"Bik?"_

"No," he moved the boy's hand back to the small island. "Berk." Naruto's brows furrowed and he began to look over the map in earnest.

"Doko no iedesu ka?"

"Uh"|"

"Doko Konoha no? Konoha no sato?!" Hiccup could see the child becoming frantic and quickly intervened.

"Naruto. Uh...Hiccup, Toothless, Astrid," he tapped their island on the map. "Berk. Home. Naruto," the viking touched a finger to the boy's sketchbook. "Home?" A spark was suddenly lit in the cerulean blue eyes.

"Ä! Ä! Mappu!" The four vikings chuckled at the quick change in temperament that the boy displayed and gathered around to view the increasingly marked parchment with curiosity. Hiccup's head whirled as he watched a strange shape come into being.

"Is that...a map?" Astrid whispered.

"I don't know, I've never seen anything like it." They continued to observe as the child carefully created a drawing of what appeared to be a very large land mass. Once the boy finished with the main portion, he began making minute circles near the left of the parchment.

"Oeta!" The abrupt yell startled them, and Hiccup suddenly found the sketchbook directly in front of his face. Naruto positively beamed as he showed off his work, which was rather impressive for an eight year old. The vikings gazed at the freshly drawn map in surprise. The land pictured there was nothing like they had ever seen before.

"Er...Naruto," Hiccup began. "Where is this?" The boy simply beamed and pointed at the largest area.

"Himitsu ryu no kuni, maih•mu. Soko," he placed his finger on a dot near the center of the page. _"Konohadesu. Konoha."_ Hiccup mimicked Naruto's gesture.

"Konoha?"

"Hai!"

"Berk?"

"Sore wa sugu sokodesu!" This time the child's tiny fingertip rested upon the equally tiny gathering of dots at the far left of the map. _"Bik!"_

"B-bu-but that's...I-I mean it's...by the power of Thorâ€|"

"Hiccup...if Naruto's right about thisâ€|"

"I know. But we can't rule out the fact that he's only eight. But at the same time, despite it being so small, he drew the Barbarian Archipelago perfectly. It's to scale and everything." Valka drew near her son.

"Hiccup, I've traveled far these last twenty years. While I've never seen this land, I have seen this particular symbol before." The young chieftain looked at what she spoke of and raised his brows in surprise. What he had originally thought was a simple dot marking the location of Naruto's 'Konoha', was in fact what looked like a falling leaf, with a swirl at its center.

"That mark is something I came across many years ago. I had found an abandoned shipwreck among the iceberg fields and this symbol was emblazoned on its side. There were no people on board, and nothing left to identify who had owned the vessel."

"Why bring this up, Mom?"

"Because, son. The area where I found it was directly between us...and the Unknown East."

* * *

><p>Naruto laid in the small wooden bed, watching the three adults speaking together in hushed tones. It was obvious that they were talking about him, judging by the less than discreet glances they sent his way. The boy didn't mind. The furs were so soft, they reminded him of home; of the fuzzy fox toy his father had given him for his birthday, of his mother's long red hair that flowed like silk, tickling his face when she kissed him goodnight. He missed them.<p>

"**"I'm sorry, hatchling."**"

"It's not your fault, Kurama." The dragon's voice in his mind soothed the child. Of all the things he'd learned about the flame-colored dragon, Naruto had been most surprised by this particular method of communication. The first time the child had heard the deep, rumbling voice cutting through his own thoughts, he'd been startled out of his wits. Kurama was unique among other dragons, part of a small group of the creatures. They were the Nine Ancestral Dragons, the children of the first dragon to exist, and the true ancestors of all who had come after them. Every species' origin could be traced to one of the nine,

despite their wide variety.

The nine Ancestrals guarded the Eastern lands, the original home of magnificent reptiles. Naruto smiled as he remembered when Kurama had explained the story to him.

Flashback

Naruto watched as Kurama lit the small bundle of wood he had collected with his plasma-like fire. He sat snuggled into the great dragon's side, beneath the edge of one enormous clawed wing. The boy's heart ached for the family and home he'd left behind several days ago. He didn't want to leave, but in the end the boy had no choice.

**"Hatchling,"** the rich rumbling interrupted his thoughts.

"Hm?"

**"Have I ever told you of the Ancestral Dragons?"**

"No...I don't think so. Why?"

**"You need to learn this. One day, this knowledge may very well save your life. It started many thousands of years ago, before humans came to this land. At that time there was only one dragon in existence, the great Ten-Tails. No one knows how it came to be, but the dragon was a powerful and fearsome beast. It ravaged the land, wreaking havoc and destroying everything in it's path. One day, two brothers landed on our shores, the first of your kind to ever step foot in this land. They were Hagoromo and Hamura Otsusuki. They saw the fertile soil and pure waters as the perfect place to create a new home. But in order to do that, they would have to destroy the Ten-Tails.**

**They were the mightiest and most valiant of men. It isn't known exactly how, but they managed to subdue and eventually defeat the beast. However, instead of killing it they kept it captive, desiring to learn what they could of its great strength. The Ten-Tails languished in its cage for many years, watching as a great civilization of men grew around it. Hagoromo and Hamura spent many hours with the dragon, but all they seemed to find was the mindless savagery of an untameable monster.**

**Until the day came when Hagoromo noticed something as he went to visit the Ten-Tails that would forever change the course of history. Hagoromo looked into the dragon's ringed eyes and knew in an instant that he and his brother had been wrong all along. For in those blood-red orbs, he saw both emotions and intelligence. He saw a creature that had a mind and heart of its own, just like him. Without hesitation, Hagoromo freed the dragon, but it made no move to hurt him or destroy their home. The Ten-Tails had changed during its days in captivity.**

_**Hagoromo, Hamura and their people watched in awe and the great dragon began to glow with an unearthly light. Before their very eyes it disappeared leaving in its stead nine pulsing, shining eggs. From those eggs hatched what would become known as the Nine Ancestral Dragons. I was the eldest, Kurama the Nine-Tails. Then came Gyuuki,

the Eight-Tails; Chomei, the Seven-Tails; Saiken, the Six-Tails; Kokuo, the Five-Tails; Son Goku, the Four-Tails; Isobu, the Three-Tails; Matatabi, the Two-Tails; and lastly, Shukaku, the One-Tail.**_

**We each picked an area of the land to guard and protect. Shukaku chose the sprawling deserts, Matatabi chose the high peaks, Isobu and Gyuuki chose the oceans and seas, Son Goku chose the fire-mountains, Kokuo chose the low valleys, Saiken chose the deep caverns, Chomei chose the dense jungles, and I chose the great forests.**

"I knew that there were Ancestral Dragons, but I didn't know anything about a Ten-Tails!"

**"That knowledge was kept secret for a reason, Naruto, and I'm entrusting it to you. The Ancestrals have abilities that no other dragon possesses. When we so choose we can speak to others by reaching out with our minds, we control elements of nature, and many other things. We answer to no one but those we trust and respect. Humans tend to lust for power, this is the very reason your parents entrusted you into my care. Take, for instance, the masked man who attacked your village the night of your birthday several days ago. He is one of those who will stop at nothing to obtain ultimate power and control.**

"But why would he want this old scroll?" Naruto patted the large, ancient scroll tucked safely away in a leather case at his side.

**"Because that scroll contains the history of your people, your genealogy. And...the Prophecy.**

"The what?" Kurama sighed deeply.

**"Before they died, both Hagoromo and Hamura beheld a vision. In it they saw a single figure who would one day reunite the power of the Ancestrals and become a vessel of their strength. It is said that this person would bear the blood of both brothers.**

"How do you know this?"

**"Each of us guards a location where the Prophecy was recorded. Mine was in my den, back in Konoha's forest. It was actually your Great-Great-Great Grandmother, Mito Uzumaki-Senju who first saw it.**

"Really?"

**"Yes. When her husband, Hashirama Senju first desired to build Konoha, they came to ask my permission. Mito later returned, and I grew to respect her enough that I revealed the Prophecy to her. I'm glad I did, for your sake especially.**

"Why mine?"

_**"Because, hatchling, you are the child of Kushina Uzumaki and Minato Namikaze. When they married they decided to combine their clan names, seeing as they were truly the last of their lines. You were born as Naruto Uzukaze, but yours is an ancient and complex lineage. You are from the Senju and Uzumaki clans on your mother's side, and

the Namikaze clan on your father's. All three of them are descendants of Hagoromo Otsusuki. But you are also related to the Hiko clan through your father, they were one of two clans that descended from Hamura Otsusuki."**_

_ "I still don't get it."_

**"Think, child! You combine both of the ancient bloodlines. From birth you have shown unique qualities that resemble those of the ancestral brothers. You have physical strength beyond expected for your age, you have a uniquely keen mind and eye, you see the world around in ways no other human does, and you have a heart like Hagoromo's and a mind like Hamura's."** Naruto sat in silence for several minutes.

_ "That's why he attacked...isn't it?" The boy looked up at the dragon, his eyes shining with an almost fierce light. "That masked man attacked because of me, am I right?"_

**"I'm afraid so."**

_ "Then why didn't you tell me before? Why did my parents lie to me? Why did they send me away saying I was just to guard the scroll?" The blond child's voice had risen to a fevered pitch and his tightly clenched fists were shaking._

**"It was because of fear, Naruto. They feared for your life! That man made it very clear that he would stop at nothing to obtain both the Scroll of Secrets and you. He intends on using you to control and tame the other Ancestrals, you would be at his command, a life of endless slavery and servitude!" **The eight year old's anger deflated at the dragon's stern words. Tears pricked at the corner of his eyes and his bottom lip trembled.

_ "B-but why didn't Mom and Dad tell me the truth?"_

**"Naruto, as much as you try not to act like it at time, you are still just a child. They didn't want you to be living in fear. It's a parent's job to protect and comfort their child, no matter how difficult it is. They wanted to spare you from living through war and bloodshed."**

_ "W-war?"_

**"Yes, hatchling. War. The masked man attacked the heir of three clans and the son of a village leader. Your father is an important man among the Hidden Villages. He is the one who brought about peace between the different nations. Hashirama Senju may have been the one to bring about the Hidden Villages, but it was Minato Namikaze who united them."** Naruto smiled.

_ "That's one of my favorite stories about him."_

_**"Indeed, young one. But back to the point. Before your father, war was constant among for the Hidden Lands. Three had been started, fought, and won, claiming countless lives and destroying others. Now we are on the cusp of a fourth. Your parents are some of the leading warriors and will need to be prepared. Knowing you are hidden and safe will give them the peace of mind they need in order to do their job. They want to make everything safe again so that you can come

home. Now, it's late and we must rest so that we can fly further towards the border tomorrow."**_

"Where are we going to stay?"

"**"I know of a place that can accommodate us both for the time being. Now, close your eyes and go to sleep."** No more words were spoken between the two as they lay underneath the twinkling stars, wondering just what life had in store for them in the coming days.

End Flashback

"**"Naruto,"** Kurama's voice interrupted the memory. _**"Let me speak to him."**_

"Wh-what?" the child stuttered out-loud in shock. The four vikings heard him and turned from their discussion.

"Naruto?" the green-eyed man questioned.

"Go on, hatchling. I'll show you what to do." Naruto nodded mentally.

"Hiccup, sir," the boy hesitantly motioned for the leather-clad rider to come closer. Surprise flashed across his face, but Hiccup quickly moved to the edge of the little bed and sat beside its occupant.

"Ja?" Naruto chewed his lip nervously as Kurama sent several images into his consciousness.

"Please," he whispered. "Don't be mad at me for this." He felt a sudden wave of warm tingling rush through his body and up into his eyes. Before the viking could blink the child had shot forward and placed two fingers at the center of his forehead and chest.

"**"Brace yourself, little one."** Naruto barely registered the dragon's words before everything around him tumbled into darkness.

* * *

><p> Translations:

**"Hicca-san, eh, gomen'nasai. K-karera wa watashi o kowagara seta."
- "Hiccup, sir, uh, I'm sorry. Th-they scared me."**

"Hicca-san, Vakka-san, to Goti-san?" - "Hiccup, Valka, and Gothi?"

"Doko no iedesu ka?" - "Where's my home?"

"Doko Konoha no? Konoha no sato?!" - "Where is Konoha? Konoha?!"

"Ä€! Ä€! Mappu!" - "Oh! Oh! A map!"

"Oeta!" - "Finished!"

***"Himitsu ryu no kuni, maihÅ•mu. Soko, Konohadesu. Konoha." - "The Land of the Secret Dragon, my home. And there, is the leaf. Konoha."**

***"Sore wa sugu sokodesu!" - "It's right there!"**

4. Chapter 4: Comprehension

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><p>AN:**

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* * *

><p>"Onegai, kono tame ni watashi ni okotte wa ikenai."
Hiccup barely heard the boy whisper the foreign words. Quick as a flash, the child's fingers touched his forehead and chest and a strange, tingling warmth radiated through him. The world faded to darkness an instant later, but not before he noticed the fact that the pupils of Naruto's cerulean eyes had changed into vertical slits.

The viking blinked several times, trying to adjust to the sudden inky blackness surrounding him. He scrabbled in the dark for a moment before his fingers wrapped around the hilt of his Dragon Blade, Inferno. Sighing in relief he quickly pressed the mechanism to release the sword, now freshly coated in Monstrous Nightmare saliva from the canister in the hilt, and triggered the lighter. Flames burst to life along its edge casting dancing shadows along the now-visible stone walls enclosing him.

Hiccup took stock of his situation as he glanced around. No longer was he in his own home sitting on the little wooden bed, he now lay on what looked to be the floor of a large cave. Ragged spikes of stone hung from the ceiling and protruded up through the floor, looking disturbingly like the teeth of some great monster. A low growl resonated through the cavern, a distinctly draconian sound that sent shivers up the viking's spine.

_***"Baikinguâ€|""** _Hiccup looked around for any route of escape, seeing only a small crack in the wall to his left. He ran over and sized it up. The passageway would accommodate him, but only just. With some effort, the chieftain managed to push his way through the opening. The space around him opened up into a massive cavern, the light from his fire-sword barely making any difference in the overwhelming gloom.

***"Hiccupâ€|""** The man froze as the terrifying voice emanated from straight in front of him. The chieftain swallowed hard, trying to push down the icy cold lump in his throat.

"Wh-wh-who a-are you?" There was no reply, but something moved within the darkness. There was the low sound of dragging, shuffling, and deep rumbling breaths. Suddenly, a shape began to come forward. Hiccup clenched his sword even tighter and waited to see just who had spoken to him. From out of the blackness, a head emerged, followed by two massive wings, an impossibly long body, and nine writhing tails. Hiccup's green eyes widened in astonishment.

"K-Kurama." The dragon snarled and rose to its full height before bearing down on the viking once more. Silence reigned for one, terrifying second, before the creature's lips moved.

***"Boo."**

* * *

><p>Hiccup was sure he would forever deny this, but at that moment a small noise escaped his mouth, something between a squeak and a squeal. The flame-colored dragon threw back his head and roared in what sounded like laughter. Hiccup stood there, his mind no longer working properly, and simply stared. Finally, he found his voice.<p>

"Y-y-you...y-you can...you can speak! By the gods, you speak! This changes everything! Oh, I have got to tell Astrid this! And the other riders! Oh, man, I've got to-"

***"Pathetic human, cease your worthless prattling."** But Hiccup didn't seem to hear him. He continued to pace, muttering ideas, and gesturing with his hands. Kurama blinked.

***"Are you...ignoring me?"**

"Hmm? What'd you say?" One scaley eyebrow rose. "Wait...I'm talking to a dragon...I am actually having a conversation with a dragon. Oh, this is amazing!"

"A rather one sided conversationâ€¦" Kurama muttered in a bored tone. Hiccup suddenly paused, realizing what he had been doing.

"Oh...er, sorry about that." In reply, the dragon huffed in the vikings face. He coughed. "Oh, joy...dragon breath." He gazed up at the flame-colored creature towering above him. "So...do you mind explaining all...this, to me?" Hiccup gestured at the area around them.

***"Hmm? Did you say something?"**

"...I probably I deserved that." The great dragon snorted.

"Probably. Now as for your question...I think there's someone else who should answer that." Kurama turned his blood-red eyes to the right, and Hiccup's followed suite. He shook his head slightly in astonishment as he watched the crevice he'd come through open and enlarge.

"Why couldn't it have done that for me?"

***"Because it was more fun to watch you struggle."**

"You have a very strange sense of humorâ€¦"

***"And I suppose you're an expert on that."**

"Wellâ€¦"

***"Hmph. Thought so. Now be silent, he's almost here."** Hiccup was about to ask who the dragon spoke of, but thought better of it. He'd aggravated the creature enough already. The cavern was quiet save for the sound of their breaths, before the slight pitter-patter of small feet on stone became audible. A moment later, a streak of golden-yellow came rushing through the entry. The chieftain felt his mouth fall open.

"Naruto?" The cerulean-eyed child smiled brightly at him as he ran over.

"Hello, Mr. Hiccup."

"Wh-what are you doing here? Where are we-wait...did you just speak in-"

***"You can understand each other's language here."** Kurama interrupted. Naruto nodded in eager agreement.

"Yup! Cool huh?" Hiccup couldn't help the grin that spread across his face at the child's enthusiasm.

"Yeah, I'd say that about sums it up. Sort ofâ€¦" The blue-eyed boy's smile wavered slightly.

"I-I'm sure you have a lot of questions...I'llâ€¦I'll try to answer them as best I can, okay? Just don't ask anything too hard."

"Alright...well, first off, where are we?"

"Oh, that's easy. We're in my mindscape!" Hiccup could only blink in confusion. Seeing this, Kurama sighed.

***"Never ask an eight year old to explain the laws of the supernatural. Hiccup, yes, technically we are in the halls of Naruto's mind, or, his mindscape as he wishes to call it."**

"Okayâ€¦"

"Um...Mr. Hiccup?"

"Oh, er, just Hiccup is fine."

"Well, Hiccup, I don't really know a lot about the kind of dragons you have here, but you've probably realized that Kurama isn't really an ordinary one."

"Yeah, I picked up on that."

"That's because he's an Ancestral!" Naruto seemed satisfied with his

explanation. The chieftain looked to Kurama in bewilderment.

***"To put it simply, I am one of the _Senzo_ _Ryu_, or in your native tongue, the Ancestral Dragons. All dragons in existence nowadays are descendents of myself or one of my siblings. There are nine _Senzo_, each with a different number of tails. I am the ninth and eldest. We are the children of the _Juubi_, the Ten-Tails."**

"Th-the ancestors of a-all dragons? B-but how is that-

***"I am an ancient being, _Baikingu_."** the dragon interrupted. "I am not held to the same laws of nature that your kind are. Humans have only begun to learn the truth of the world they live in."

"The truth?" Kurama nodded.

***"_Hai_". There are powers beyond your comprehension. Call them what you may, gods, demons, spirits, in the end it is all the same. An energy flows through the world. The air, the ground, the water, all are made of it. It is the very essence of life. It is what causes the storm clouds to gather, the tides to come in, even the very beating of your heart relies on its call. It is everything and nothing, it is unchanging yet ever remains the same."**

Hiccup stood there, gaping, his mind furiously trying to process all he'd heard. It was too much. This overturned everything he thought he knew. His thoughts were interrupted by Kurama growling deeply in his throat.

***"We don't have time for this. I can only hold the connection for so long. I brought you here in order to explain the situation we are in to you. Naruto needs protection. His homeland is now locked in war, and I was given the charge of keeping him safe."** Hiccup's eyes widened at this.

"Homeland? War?"

***"_Hai_". We are, as you have likely already guessed, from the _T  kai Azuma_, the Hidden East. It is the birthplace of dragons and of Naruto's people. They rarely wander into the Outside World, but this was an exception. I intended to bring him to a sanctuary I knew of. One of my brother's descendants presides there, although it has been nearly twenty years since I last saw him. However, before we reached it we were ambushed by the man you call, Drago."** Hiccup furrowed his brows in confusion. He had been puzzling over how impossible it seemed for any man to capture and imprison a creature such as Kurama.

"What happened?" Naruto's snuffle caught his attention. The boy had been silent during the exchange, content to simply sit playing with one of the dragon's tails. But now he had his golden head bowed and his shoulders slumped.

"It was my fault," he almost tearfully muttered.

***"Naruto  | " **

"It's true, Kurama!" The child turned to Hiccup. "Kurama had been flying so much so we stopped for a break. He told me to stay put,

but...but I didn't listen. I wandered off, we were near these huge things of ice and I really wanted to see them! I-I got lost and...and I started calling out for Kurama. B-but instead of him finding me th-there were these men. I-I couldn't understand what they said...they g-gr-grabbed me and tied me up! I tried really, really hard to stop them! But I-I-I couldn't!" Hiccup didn't hesitate in wrapping his arms around the now weeping child as he continued to stutter out the tale.

"Th-they s-seemed really mad that I wouldn't stop crying, I can remember them hitting me on the head with something, but that's it. Next time I w-woke up th-there was this big man standing in front of m-me. H-he-he g-g-grabbed me an-and yelled! I w-w-was s-so scared! Th-that's when I h-heard Kurama roaring outside...wherever I was. And th-then...then h-heâ€|"

***"Hatchling, that's enough,"** the great dragon spoke in a voice more tender than Hiccup had heard from him before. He turned his red eyes to the viking chieftain.

***"Drago saw the connection between Naruto and I, and threatened him in order to get me to back down. Before I knew it, they had trapped me in their hideout. Many times Drago attempted to subdue me, but his alpha could not hold sway over a mind such as mine. I could have escaped at any point in time, but to do so would require me destroying most of the structure. I could not risk any harm to Naruto, so I was forced to wait. Drago figured out that the boy was my rider, due to the saddle we had been using, among other things. His attempts to convince Naruto to teach him how it was done were useless, he couldn't understand the language and I wasn't around to translate for him. We could only speak through our minds when no one else was around. Eventually, Drago seemed to give up on this and simply kept us locked up."** Hiccup looked down at the now calmer child in his arms.

"How long?" he asked, almost afraid of the answer.

***"We were there for nearly a year. For a time, everything was quiet. My size was a disadvantage for any method of escape. Should I burn or destroy the hideout, Naruto's life would be in great danger. But his own tries were easily thwarted by the guards who were posted there until just over three days ago."**

"That is when Drago attacked Berk."

***"I wondered what had occurred. The madman showed up at the outpost, gathered his men, tried one last time to get information from Naruto, and then left. I had been slowly destroying the cage by the time you arrived. I do not know what the metal was made of, but it was incredibly difficult to remove."**

"I suspect it was a form of Dragon Iron. I'm not surprised you struggled to escape." He continued to absentmindedly run his fingers through the boy's sunshine colored locks. Naruto didn't seem to mind though. The blue-eyed boy was exhausted after his emotional outburst was quite content to remain cuddled into Hiccup's side. The chieftain made his decision. He turned and locked gazes with the Ancestral.

"What do you need me to do?" Kurama's lips pulled back, revealing

curved, razor-sharp teeth in what the viking hoped was a smile.

***"First, there is something we must retrieve from Drago's hideout."**

* * *

><p>The sight of the boy's slit pupils stole the breath from Astrid's lungs and caused her heart to skip several beats. The room felt heavy and an electric tingling skittered up her arms and across the back of her neck.<p>

"Hiccup!" the cry flew from Valka's lips as all three women rushed to the bed. Panic gripped them as both of its occupants slumped over, unconscious.

"What's going on?" Astrid yelled, continuing to frantically shake the young chief's shoulder.

"I-I don't know," Valka stammered. "The boy...he changed. His eyes were like...a dragon's"

"But how? How is that possible?" The two women were interrupted by Gothi banging her staff down hard on the wooden floor, the sharp sound ringing through the hut. The elderly healer. sketched out several archaic characters on the piece of parchment Naruto had been drawing on previously.

"What...what is she saying?" Valka whispered. Astrid squinted at the paper for a moment, before replying.

"I...I think that's the rune for 'mind' and those figures mean-" The blond viking looked up sharply at the elder. "M-magic?" Gothi gave a single nod. Their mouths fell open in shock, and they glanced back and forth in between her and the frail child.

"You mean he has...magic? Naruto?"

"Amazing...but are-are you sure they're okay?" Gothi shrugged and scribbled out two more pictures.

"Wait and see? Really? But we need to do something!" Valka hesitantly placed a hand on the distraught woman's shoulders.

"We...we should trust Gothi. Come, let's make them more comfortable." The three of them gingerly returned Naruto to the pillow he had slid from and laid Hiccup beside him. Then began the agonizing wait. What seemed like hours was in reality only a few moments before both boy and man stirred. The women held their breath, watching anxiously as cerulean-blue and forest-green eyes fluttered open.

"Hiccup?" Astrid whispered. A terrible weight fell from her shoulders and heart as he gave her a gentle, lop-sided grin. He turned to the child laying beside him. Naruto seemed to have become more withdrawn in the tense atmosphere he had awakened to. Hiccup took a small hand into his own larger ones. No words were said, but they seemed to come to some agreement as the blond-haired child smiled shyly up at the adults.

"H-hello." They blinked.

"Did he justâ€¦|" Astrid trailed off, unable to finish her question.

"Yeah, I have a feeling that with a little patience and work, he'll get the hang of our language."

"But, son, what happened to ya?" Hiccup groaned.

"That's...a really long story." The viking maiden crossed her arms and gave him an intense look.

"We have time." Hiccup chuckled nervously at that.

"R-right. Well, to start I-" A piercing shriek cut him off. The five of them only had time to turn towards the door before it burst open, the heavy piece of wood coming completely off its hinges. A mass of black scales and brown leather rushed into the room before pouncing on the bed.

"T-tooth! Toothless!" The Night Fury was nuzzling him furiously, sniffing the chieftain from head to foot in worry. Then, to their surprise, he began to nose at Naruto as well. The child showed no fear at the sudden contact, instead it seemed an immense comfort to him. The adults could only watch in shock as the giggling boy was licked again and again by the reptile. Hiccup abruptly began chuckling, gaining confused looks from the three women.

"I'm sorry, it's just after speaking with Kurama, I'm beginning to wonder how Toothless' might sound."

"Wait...Kurama? As in Naruto's dragon? And what do you mean you 'spoke' with him?" Hiccup ran a hand through his hair and shrugged.

"I really don't know how else to describe it. As crazy as it sounds, I spoke to Kurama just now. Face to face, actually." The viking chieftain cringed slightly at the looks his mother and girlfriend were giving him. Astrid sat down next to him and placed a hand rather firmly onto his arm.

"Talk." Her tone brooked no argument. The blond viking's eyebrow rose as Hiccup turned to gaze at Naruto, as if asking permission. The child gave a shy nod and the young man smiled in return before beginning his explanation.

* * *

><p>Naruto knew what Hiccup was telling the three strangely dressed women. It had been obvious that the man wanted to share what had happened in the mindscape, but the child couldn't suppress the warmth that had risen within him when he realized that Hiccup cared about his opinion on the matter. Naruto trusted the foreign man, completely. Part of it was the fact that he was still a child, and tended to still trust implicitly at times. But he had been raised with the mindset of a warrior and had been through too much to ever be so carefree again. However, Hiccup had faced Kurama, and the fact that the man wasn't either dead or rambling like a madman meant that he had passed the unspoken test.<p>

The blue-eyed boy continued to stroke the black dragon's head which lay in his lap, running his fingers over the iridescent scales absent-mindedly. He listened to the adults as they spoke in their own language, the words seemed to roll and twist but Naruto realized that he began to recognize repeated sounds. Specific words stood out to him, yet he couldn't define their meaning just yet. An idea suddenly came into his head.

"Hiccup?" The adults paused, looking at him in surprise. He flushed slightly at the attention, feeling embarrassed. Naruto pointed at each of them, speaking to each in turn.

"Hiccup, Astrid, Valka, Gothi, Toothless?" He knew his pronunciation was likely terrible, but the names felt foreign on his tongue. Hiccup didn't seem to mind.

"Ja?" the man replied. The child pointed to himself.

"Naruto."

"Nar..to?"

"Na-ru-to."

"Na...ru...to." A grin came to the boy's face. It was slow progress, but progress nonetheless. Now for something harder. Naruto patted his hand on the lumpy mattress he lay on.

"Bed." He nearly groaned in frustration at the clueless look on Hiccup's face. He gestured again and repeated the single word.

"Bed." The viking seemed to hesitate for a moment, before pointing also.

"Seng?" Naruto wrinkled his nose and attempted the sound.

"Sssseeeeng. Seng?" Their eyebrows rose and an excited gleam appeared in the man's eyes. Naruto could only hope they had caught onto what he was trying to accomplish. He held up the corner of the woolen blanket covering him.

"Blanket." This time Hiccup didn't hesitate.

"Teppe."

"Tep-puh?" The four vikings beamed at him. This time it was Astrid who spoke, she walked over to them and handed Naruto a small goblet of water.

"Drikke," she spoke, miming taking a drink from the cup. The blond-haired child took a sip and repeated the word.

"Drikke?"

"Ja!" At this success, Naruto decided to try something more

difficult. He pointed towards Toothless.

"Dragon," he carefully enunciated. Hiccup shook his head in confusion.

"Huh? Nei, TannlÃ,s."

"Toothless," the boy tried again.
"Dragon."

"TannlÃ,s...Drage?"

"Drage?" The man nodded and smiled. Naruto took a deep breath, knowing what he had to do next, and shakily pointed to the his bandaged wrist then looked directly into forest-green eyes.

"Drago."

* * *

><p>Translations:

"Onegai, kono tame ni watashi ni okotte wa ikenai." - "Please, don't be mad at me for this."

"Baikingu." - "Viking."

"Hai." - "Yes."

"Senzo Ryu." - "Ancestral Dragons."

"TÃ•kai Azuma." - "Hidden East."

"Juubi." - "Ten-Tails."

"Ja?" - "Yes?"

"Seng." - "Bed."

"Teppe." - "Blanket."

"Drikke." - "Drink."

"Huh? Nei, TannlÃ,s." - "Huh? No, Toothless."

"TannlÃ,s...Drage?" - "Toothless...Dragon?"

5. Chapter 5: Lullaby

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><p>AN:**

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><p>Hiccup couldn't stop the gasp that escaped him. The boy before him had uttered the word with such solemnity, he couldn't help but recall the child's appearance when they had first met. The chieftain gently touched the tiny wrist with one hand and the fabric wrapped around the boy's head with the other.<p>

"Drago." He reiterated, watching as a weight seemed to slip from those small shoulders. The golden-haired child leaned into his touch with a deep sigh. Naruto stilled for a moment, before looking back up at Hiccup. Tiredly, the boy picked up the parchment he had previously been drawing on. The adults watched, curious, as he rolled it lengthwise. He held it up to Hiccup.

"SukurÅ•ru," he whispered. The chieftain recalled what Kurama had mentioned to him during his time in the mindscape.

"Scroll...Kurama?" The child nodded, yawning.

"Drago...Kurama...sukurÅ•ruâ€|" The vikings watched as cerulean-blue eyes began to drift shut. Hiccup carefully laid the boy back down onto the bed, pulling the woolen blanket up around his small frame.

"Hai," he murmured in the child's own tongue, causing a smile to grace the scarred face before it slackened in deep slumber.

"Poor thingâ€|" Valka tutted softly. "Wore himself right out."

"Yeah, but rest is what his body needs. Right, Gothi?" The elderly healer nodded to her chieftain, gesturing the three of them towards the door.

"Your right, Astrid, Mom, Toothless, come on. We need to go."

"What are you planning, Hiccup. And what was with that weird paper thing?"

"Just another job for the dragon riders. Now, we'd better get going before we accidentally wake him up." Valka chuckled.

"Oh, I doubt there's much that would awaken the poor lad, he's sound asleep sure enough." Hiccup smiled as he closed the door once Toothless' tailfin was through. Hearing footsteps, they turned to see Gobber and Eret climbing up the rocky hill.

"Ey, Chief!" the former dragon trapper called out. "Ya wouldn't believe what just 'appened!"

"Let me guess, Kurama did something strange and Toothless freaked out and ran off." The mouths of the two men fell open in surprise.

"Ow did ye-"

"Wasn't that hard to figure out judging from what just happened in there. But I'm glad you're here, I need your help."

"With what, chief?" Hiccup held out the rolled parchment Naruto had given him.

"I need you, along with the other dragon riders to go back to the hideout we found. Look for an object that's like this, only a lot bigger."

"What does that have to do with anything, Hiccup?"

"It's really important, Astrid. Its called a scroll, Naruto's people uses them to keep records, just like we have book."

"How do ye know that, laddie?"

"It's a long story, Gobber. Too long for right now." The chieftain noticed the puzzled look on Eret's face. "What is it?"

"I'm just wonderin' why you need me to go?"

"Well, you knew Drago better than we did. If anyone can figure out where he would keep something like that, it's you." Eret grimaced at the reminder of his less than stellar past.

"Right, we'll get on it."

"Thanks you guys. And as for you, m'lady." Astrid noticed the slight gleam in Hiccup's eyes and couldn't help but grin. "Someone's going to need to keep them in lineâ€|"

"You got it, babe." The blonde-haired viking gave him a quick kiss on the cheek before leaving with the others. Toothless crooned softly at his rider, nosing his hand.

"Alright, bud. Let's go." It was the work of only a moment for Hiccup to settle himself in the saddle and they took off into the skies above Berk. In a few minutes they reached the area where Kurama was staying. The enormous dragon lay curled up in the empty field, his body coiled several times over. Hiccup momentarily marveled at the sight, amazed at the fact that such a large animal could fit on the island at all. He guessed that it was due to the creature's flexible length, unlike either of the Bewilderbeast's which had been there only days before. The dragon opened one blood-red eye as they landed, watching them carefully. Hiccup gulped audibly, the knowledge of Kurama's intelligence now seemed slightly disturbing in light of the situation. The viking had faced many species of dragon's in the past, but this was on an entirely different level.

"**"Is there something you wish to discuss, human? Or must I tolerate your gaze all day?"** Hiccup started as the deep rumbling echoed through his mind, beside him, Toothless grunted. The chieftain couldn't tell who the Night Fury was more annoyed with, his rider or the foreigner.

"Uh, w-well I, um...sorry." The black dragon rolled his luminescent eyes at the man's faltering words, flicking an ear into his

face.

"Ouch! Toothless?" He was about to continue when Kurama lifted his great, flame-colored head.

"**"Hmph, insolent pups,"** he drawled. **_"If you're done with disciplining your nestmate, Night Stalker, perhaps we can get down to business."_** Toothless bowed his head and crooned in reply, gently nudging Hiccup forward.

"Er, right. Um, the other dragon riders have headed back to, uh, the hideout to get the scroll. B-but I was wondering if I could, uh, ask a couple of questions."

"**"Very well. What is it you wish to know?"** Hiccup shifted his prosthetic slightly in nervousness.

"Well, you mentioned back in the, um, mindscape that you were going to take Naruto to a sanctuary you knew of."

"Hai, one of my nestmate's descendants built a nest that I learned of during my travels long before Naruto's birth. I intended to guard him there, for a human like yourself dwelt in the ice caves as well, and I hoped for her assistance in raising him. I am, after all, a dragon and I knew some of his needs would be beyond my comprehension." Hiccup only partially heard the last few words. He had frozen upon hearing Kurama speak of a human dwelling amidst dragons in a nest made of ice.

"Wh-when was this p-place built, exactly?" he stuttered. The Ancestral paused for a moment, thinking.

"**"Nearly twenty years ago, as far as I can recall. The Ice Breather is from my brother, Isobu's, lineage. He is an alpha, much like the Night Stalker, and-"** Kurama ceased speaking as Hiccup's legs gave out from beneath him. Toothless quickly intervened, using his head to support the one-legged man. His mind was spinning, connecting the dots between what the dragon was saying and what his mother had told him. The alpha Bewilderbeast, the Dragon Sanctuary, it all tied together. Hiccup knew he had to explain to Kurama, but he simply couldn't speak, still too stunned by the recent revelation to find his voice. Toothless, seeming to sense his rider's needs, warbled to the Ancestral in a respectful tone. This went on for a few minutes before Kurama grunted and sat further upright.

"**"I see...the Ice Breather was killed by a rival alpha, who was then challenged and defeated by you? And now the dragon's reside here?"** The Night Fury nodded and crooned his reply.

"**"Very well. I can sense that, despite its state, this island would be a safe haven for Naruto. If he wishes to we will remain here or close by. Is that acceptable, alpha?"** Toothless bowed his head again and turned to Hiccup, who had finally regained his thoughts.

"So...Naruto...might stay?" He didn't know why it felt so important to him, but for some reason the viking never wanted the blond-haired, blue-eyed little boy to leave the village.

"**"If he so chooses, yes."**

* * *

><p>Back in Hiccup's home, Naruto remained fast asleep. Valka sat in a small chair nearby, carefully mending one of the many tears in her battle cloak from the attack nearly four days ago. She kept sneaking glances at the child as she worked, her mind recalling events from both the far past and just earlier that day. Her son had mentioned the great dragon, Kurama, that had come with them from Drago's abandoned hideaway. The details tickled at the far reaches of her mind, and for some inexplicable reason, Valka felt sure she had seen such a creature before, many years ago.<p>

The dragon rider wondered if it could possibly be the same one that had visited the Dragon Sanctuary shortly after its creation. She had not been allowed in the main chamber that day, and had only caught a glimpse of multiple flame-colored tails. But it had piqued her interest and begun her endeavor to learn all she could about each species of dragon. As the years passed, she had forgotten some of the details, sure that her imagination had played some part in the memory. But now, after hearing her son's description of the animal, she wasn't so sure.

"Mama." The tiny whimper was barely audible, but it made Valka's maternal instincts rear up like a flame. She abandoned her needle work and darted to the little bed. Naruto continued to make small sounds of distress, his face scrunched up and limbs twitching. Valka noticed the beads of sweat gathering along his forehead as the boy's movements became stronger and more violent. She placed a cool cloth on his brow and tried to help him, hesitant to hold the child due to his many injuries. But the fit only escalated.

Valka wrung her hands together, she had tended countless dragons, healed a variety of injuries, and had softened even the most violent of them. But when it came to her own kind, she felt useless. Gothi had since returned to her own home, Astrid was away with the other riders, and Hiccup was off doing who knows what. As sobs escaped Naruto's shaking lips, Valka threw caution to the wind. Scooping the frail boy off the bed and into her lap, she held and rocked him, mindful of the bandages swathing his tiny form. Constricted by her arms, his limbs briefly became more forceful in their movements. He let out pained cries at the pressure on his wounds, but still remained locked in sleep and whatever nightmare he was trapped within. A tear ran down Valka's cheek as she battled her own emotions.

"Gods help me," she whispered, frantically trying to think of a way to calm the child. She called upon every memory she could think of from her brief time in raising Hiccup as an infant. One stood out to her, a night with a terrible storm that had woken her son with its terrible thunder. Nothing seemed to calm him except the voice of his mother and one particular song. Unable to see any other options, Valka tightened her hold on Naruto and began to sing.

"Little child, be not afraid.

The rain pounds harsh against the glass,

Like an unwanted stranger,

There is no danger,

I am here tonight."

After the first few lines, the blond-haired boy had lessened his movement slightly, his body listening subconsciously. Valka continued, her voice filled with emotion as she relived those few precious moments with her son.

"Little child, be not afraid.

Though thunder explodes,

And lightning flash,

Illuminates your tear-stained face.

I am here tonight."

"And someday you'll know,

That nature is so.

This same rain that draws you near me,

Falls on rivers and land,

And forests and sand,

Makes the beautiful world that you see,

In the morning."

Naruto's tears had stopped, and his sobs had finally quieted. But he continued to shake as Valka forged on with the lullaby.

"Little child, be not afraid.

The storm clouds mask your beloved moon,

And its candlelight beams,

Still keep pleasant dreams.

I am here tonight."

"Little child, be not afraid.

The wind makes creatures of our trees,

And the branches to hands,

They're not real, understand,

And I am here tonight."

"And someday you'll know,

That nature is so.

This same rain that draws you near me,
Falls on rivers and land,
And forest and sand,
Makes the beautiful world that you see,
In the morning."

Valka paused, carefully watching the boy's face. His shaking had ceased but his brow remained furrowed in distress. The viking lowered her voice to a near whisper, cradling the child as tenderly as she could.

"For you know, once even I,
Was a little child,
And I was afraid,
But a gentle someone always came,
To dry all my tears,
Trade sweet sleep the fears,
And to give a kiss goodnight."

She pressed her lips to Naruto's forehead, noting the lack of the feverish heat from before, and continued.

"Well, now I am grown,
And these years have shown,
Rain's a part of how life goes.
But it's dark and it's late,
So I'll hold you and wait,
'til your frightened eyes do close."

"And I hope that you'll know,
That nature is so.

This same rain that draws you near me,
Falls on rivers and land,
And forests and sand,
Makes the beautiful world that you see,
In the morning."

She noticed the stillness of the boy in her arms. Whatever torment he had been enduring seemed to have stopped, leaving him to slip back

into a peaceful sleep. A smile came to Valka's face as she sung the last three lines.

"Everything's fine in the morning.

The rain will be gone in the morning.

But I'll still be here in the morning."

* * *

><p>Kurama suddenly growled low in his throat, his ears erect and pupils narrowed. Hiccup was startled from his thoughts by the sound.<p>

"What is it?" The large dragon abruptly turned to him and raised a mammoth claw.

"**"Hold still,"** he ordered, placing one sharp tip against the viking's chest and another in the center of his forehead. The memory of Naruto doing the same calmed Hiccup, and he prepared himself for what was about to happen. He patted Toothless gently.

"I'll be back soon, bud." Then reality melted away and Hiccup opened his eyes to see himself once again in the large cavern at Kurama's feet. The dragon snorted, his hot breath ghosting through the cool air.

"There is something I need to show you, _Baikingu_." Smoke curled from his nostrils, gathering together on the floor in a large circle. Colors seeped into the billowing grey, forming abstract shapes that slowly came into focus. Hiccup blinked in surprise at the image presented to him. It was Naruto, but not like he'd ever seen him before. This Naruto was healthy and happy, laughing in delight at something whilst he held in the arms of a man and a woman. The viking immediately knew that these were the boy's parents. The man shared the same spiky blond hair and piercing blue eyes as his son, but Naruto's face and eye shape were definitely inherited from the red-headed woman.

"These are his parents." It wasn't a question. Kurama nodded.

"_Hai_", Minato and Kushina Uzukaze. They were rare among humans, both pure of spirit with strong hearts and minds. Among the few of your species that held my respect." Hiccup froze as the dragon's words registered in his mind.

"Were?" The enormous reptile sighed heavily and Hiccup noted just how old and tired he looked in that brief moment.

"Naruto does not yet know this, but they both perished shortly after we left the East. They died at the hand of a madman, sacrificing themselves to save their people and prevent him from following us. Even as we speak, the hatchling is having a nightmare about the last time he saw them." Hiccup turned sharply towards him as he said this.

"Then I need to go back, right now." Kurama shook his head.

"Your mother seems to have the situation handled. I can hear her singing to him and the hatchling seems to have calmed a little." That surprised Hiccup. Yet he was glad that, despite twenty years without hardly any human contact, her motherly instincts remained intact. The chieftain had a sudden thought run through his mind. He knew it would likely be difficult, but he felt it the right decision.

"Show me."

"Hm?"

"Please, show me what he is seeing. Show me what he is going through." Kurama regarded me carefully.

"Why do you wish this?" Hiccup summoned up all his courage and looked the fearsome creature straight in the eye.

"Because unless I know what he is has suffered, I'll never know how to help him recover." They held each others gaze for several moments, neither wavering. The viking felt as though his very soul was being weighed by those blood-red orbs. Finally, the dragon seemed satisfied with whatever he had found and nodded.

"Very well. Brace yourself, human.

* * *

><p>The song is "Lullaby For a Stormy Night" by Vienna Teng. I wasn't planning on putting it in, but the scene had a mind of its own, so there you go. I'm amazed at how it came together, the lyrics were perfect and really seemed like something Valka would sing to her infant son. Go check it out on Youtube, it's amazing.

Translations:

"SukurÅ•ru." - "Scroll."

"Mama." - "Mommy."

"Hai." - "Yes."

"Baikingu." - "Viking"

6. Chapter 6: The Nightmare

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* * *

><p>AN:**

**Wow, I can't even begin to express how grateful I am for all of you. I truly appreciate all of the time and effort you have spent to help me with this story. I want it to succeed, and I want it to be something that my readers enjoy fully. The feedback I have received

has made all the difference for me during the writing process. Thank you.**

****Quick Update:****

****Poll results:** Looks like Naruto's main roles will be as a dragon translator and trainer, but there will be 'sage' elements in here as well.**

****In this chapter I'll reveal the dragon I've created as the antagonist who attacked Konoha and who its rider is. Thank you to D N Walker, Apedreitor, JRecon, lv2, mylife00, yukicrewger2, False sense of insanity, Alarose, and jmorris1501 for their incredible help! I'm happy with how my creation turned out, and I hope you will be too. I knew I needed to get this right on the first shot. Naruto's people aren't afraid of dragons, after all, the respect and revere them. This creature needed to be horrific enough that the first glance strikes fear into their hearts.**
>

* * *

><p>Hiccup felt as though he were floating in midair. Unlike when he rode atop Toothless, where he would continually feel the Earth Mother, JǺrǺ°, continually pulling at him to return to land. The chieftain could feel nothing, see nothing, smell and hear nothing. For a moment, Hiccup wondered if he had been sent to Helheim. But a voice, overwhelming yet soothing at the same time, calmed him, triggering a flood of memories to return.<p>

"Calm yourself, this is a Memori no shichǺ•, a memory viewing. You asked to see what was contained in Naruto's nightmare, so I performed a technique that would allow just that. Although, the images will technically be from an outside perspective, because you need to know the complete story. But be warned, now that the spell has taken effect, there will be no turning back. You must see this through to the end." Unable to force his voice to comply, Hiccup could only nod his understanding.

"Good," the unseen being growled out. "Now, Hajime!" Hiccup felt himself blink as color suddenly swirled into existence before his eyes, forming strange shapes and patterns. The image slowly cleared to show what seemed to be a village, unlike any he'd ever seen before. It was surrounded by a high wall except one side which consisted of a cliff side. Into the rock were carved several stone faces, whose features Hiccup could not fully decipher from his current position high above.

Beyond the wall lay a vast, green forest which stretched on for miles, stunning Hiccup with its immensity. He turned his attention back to the village, noting the strange architecture of the buildings within. Unlike those of Berk the structures seemed to have multiple levels and were constructed not only out of wood, but metal as well. Hiccup briefly wondered if they knew about Thor's tendencies when it came to that particular material.

The variety of colors dazzled the viking chieftain, who'd only ever lived surrounded by duller, earthen tones and hues. But here, red's, blue's, yellow's, and even orange's, dotted the landscape. Some in the form of walls and rooftops, other times seen as signs covered

with foreign symbols, one repeated more than any other which Hiccup noted looked rather like a leaf with a swirl at its center.

An evening sun was casting its golden rays over the peaceful village, giving everything a dreamlike quality. As the vision zoomed into focus, Hiccup saw families strolling down the well-packed earthen paths. Children darted about in innocent play, and merchants hawked their wares. Men and women wearing matching clothing and an assortment of strange looking knives and swords, leapt from rooftop to rooftop in a startling display. As the sky darkened further, the villagers began lighting what looked like decorated, paper lanterns, strung along like dozens of pale, twinkling stars.

Sounds and smells began to filter into Hiccups senses. Children giggling, women chatting and men laughing loudly filled the air with a sense of joy and happiness. Exotic scents filled his nose, spices and foods that he had never before even dreamed of and hundreds of sweet aromas that drifted from arrangements of flowers both worn and held. Games seemed to be the order of the evening for some as they gathered around various stalls, competing with each other in good humor.

Hiccup watched everything eagerly, the scene before him so different and yet so similar to what he had seen many times back on Berk. The food and drink may have been different, but the hungry mouths and satisfied stomachs were the same. The games and decorations may have been foreign, but the joyous laughter and camaraderie were easily recognizable. The children may be running about gabbling about things he'd couldn't comprehend, but there was no denying that familiar spark of life in their wide, lively eyes.

Just as the sun was about to set, the villagers began congregating around one particular building. It rose up higher than the others surrounding it, and stood out with its vibrant red coloring. As he drew closer, Hiccup realized that a small group of people stood atop the structure on a large platform. He gasped upon seeing just who it was. A man and woman stood at the front, spiky blond hair and long red locks so instantly recognizable to Hiccup. He quickly looked at the child standing between them, already knowing exactly who he would see.

The little boy had a firm grasp on either of his parent's hands, looking out at the crowd in an awed yet nervous fashion. The unique lines on each cheek twitched as he chewed his bottom lip in an adorable fashion. Hiccup couldn't help but smile widely at the sight of Naruto standing there with his parents. He turned his focus to the man as he stepped forward, briefly recalling the name Kurama had told him. Minato Namikaze gazed down at the crowd below him, who seemed eager to hear him speak. Hiccup realized that the man must be something akin to a chief for this village as he noted the respect bordering upon adoration that the villagers held for him.

Minato began to speak, and Hiccup was surprised to realize that he could understand each word clearly. Likely due to Kurama's technique. He found himself soaking in the man's authoritative yet warm voice, which while not being identical, held many of the same qualities as his own father's.

"Citizens of Konoha," Minato began. "Today we celebrate the anniversary of peace being brought to our lands after the Great War.

We celebrate those who gave their lives in honor so that we might be here today. We celebrate the great heroes of our generation and of those past. We give remembrance to all the sacrifices made so that this gathering could be possible. I ask of you all to keep within your hearts a prayer for those whom this day is bittersweet. Remember the veterans, our brave soldiers who fought so valiantly. Remember the widow's and widower's who lost those who were their other half. Remember the orphan's, forced to grow up ahead of their time due to their parent's sacrifice on the battlefield. Recall who we were before that day ten years ago. Recall the bloodshed, tears, and bitter hearts. Recall the merciless actions between our rivalling villages and countries." Hiccup could see the many tears being shed at the man's resounding words. Unbidden memories came to his own mind, and he smiled at the thought of his own people. Their struggles, their hardships, and their sacrifices.

"Never forget those whose actions brought about this final peace. Never forget the words that ended the terrible bloodshed. Never forget the relief you felt when the war was, at long last, declared over. This is a time to honor and pay homage to the past, but also to rejoice in the present. We celebrate all those who are with us here today. We celebrate the countless lives that were saved by the heroic actions of others. We celebrate the families that have come together, the children born into this new life, the love that continues to bloom under the ever watchful eyes of our former leaders, whose faces are forever carved into the mountain behind me." Now the chieftain understood what he had noticed before. Just as his own people paid homage to past chieftains through songs and painted shields, this village had a way, too, of keeping them in their hearts.

"As I stand before you, I am eternally grateful for all that you have given me. You supported me during the war, as a soldier. You have guided me throughout the years, as your leader. And you have made it possible for me to stand here before you as a truly blessed man, as a husband to the woman I love most, and as a father to my son who was born on this day seven years ago." Hiccup chuckled at the blush that came to Naruto's face as he shyly hid behind his mother.

"From the bottom of my heart I thank you. May the god's bless us this night, and keep us safe through this coming year. Thank you." A moment of silence followed his last words, before resounding cheers rang through the air as people clapped and shouted. Hiccup couldn't help but wish to join them, while at the same time sorrowing at the knowledge that he would never be able to meet this incredible man. Turning from the jubilant crowd, he watched as the Uzukaze family descended from the high platform.

He could clearly see Naruto's embarrassed flush as he tugged at his father's long, white cloak and the mischievous smile on his mother's face. They exchanged words, but Hiccup was unable to hear them. The gathered villagers had dispersed to continue their activities, and the family of three had been quick to disappear into the large, red building. The viking tried to follow them, but found himself instead moving back towards where the viewing had first begun.

Time passed fluidly for Hiccup as he continued to watch the festivities continue in peaceful happiness. Everything seemed perfect in the lantern lit village. He should have known better than to think it would remain that way. Hiccup couldn't quite grasp when it began, but a feeling of unease settled over him, and apparently the people

in his vision also sensed it. At first it was only the agile, roof-hopping warriors who first detected the change. Their stances shifted, become tense, strained, and their faces showed growing unease. Then the civilians began to react, looking around in bewilderment as concerned parents gathered children and shopkeepers ceased their selling. Suddenly, Hiccup found himself once again above the large, red building as Minato and Kushina walked out onto a balcony, Naruto fast asleep in his mother's arms.

The red-head's concern was clear as she spoke to her husband in a near whisper.

"Minato? What is it?" The blue-eyed man didn't reply for a moment as he looked out to the far horizon. Time seemed to hold still for a brief moment before Minato breathed sharply, a hand reaching into his coat and pulling out several strange knives. Kushina stiffened upon seeing the movement, apparently knowing the significance of the weapons. Her violet eyes widened and she gripped the child in her arms closer to her chest.

"M-Minato?" Said man turned to his wife, expression stern.

"Take Naruto to the safe house."

"But -"

"Kushina!" She stopped at her husband's desperate tone. "Please," he pleaded. Some unspoken message passed between them and she nodded, tearfully. Minato sighed, bending forward to kiss his wife gently on the lips, before placing another on Naruto's forehead.

"Happy Birthday, son."

That is when the chaos began.

A massive shadow blocked the moon's silver ray's a tremendous wind began to roar through the skies. Upturned faces held expressions of horror as they beheld the shape silhouetted against the pale sphere. Hiccup's brows furrowed as he looked up at the descending creature. It was a dragon, there was no doubt about that. But this dragon differed from any he'd ever seen before, being more monstrous in appearance than even he was used to. Twisted branch-like appendages extended from its back, writhing grotesquely. Its lip-less maw was agape, showing ragged teeth jutting out from a squared jaw with spiked plates along its chin. Above the terrible mouth, nine lidless eyes rolled about in their sockets, each in different directions, creating a dizzying and sickening display.

The wings were horrific. Made of translucent, jagged skin with pulsing veins and protruding bones, giving it an air of descending death. They extended down the front limbs, ending in a series of lethal thorn-like claws. Its body curled and coiled as it flew, the serpentine length bristling with rows upon rows of cruelly hooked scales. The back limbs were like lashing, tearing legs, each tipped by three long talons. The winding tail came to a point before separating into ten deadly spear-like spurs, wiping about causing mass devastation.

Buildings were piles of rubble in mere seconds, people reduced to unrecognizable smears of red along the pathways. Screams, shrieks and

blood-curdling cries filled the night air with their heart-wrenching grief. Hiccup sobbed, unable to stomach the gruesome scene yet incapable of looking away. He witnessed the nightmarish sight for what felt like days, which in reality was only minutes. The strangely dressed warriors came at the beast by the dozens, each wave of fighters bravely defending those under protection before being shredded and tossed away by the terrible limbs, teeth, and tail.

Hiccup could scarcely comprehend the hellish slaughter. Everything moved so quickly, yet so slow at the same time. Lifeless bodies were now scattered across the blood soaked village while others were crushed and trapped beneath piles of mutilated structures. Stone, wood, and flesh filled the air as the monstrous creature dealt out death to the peaceful village. Mercilessly wreaking havoc, abaddon, and destruction. It seemed to the viking that Ragnarok had finally come to claim its final victory.

Abruptly, his eyes were drawn to the head of the dragon, or more precisely, the man who stood atop it. Red hair hung limply around his face, shadowing his pale, gaunt features. A black cloak swirled around him in the wind, decorated with red designs in the shape of clouds. The chieftain immediately knew that this was the one who had orchestrated the attack. That this was the man responsible for all the death, pain and despair he now witnessed. Anger like he'd rarely felt before rose up within his chest and burned as it raced through his veins. He wanted nothing more than to reach out and give the red-headed man a taste of his fury.

But before he could even attempt to move his ethereal form, Hiccup was blinded by the sudden light which flashed before his eyes. When his vision returned, the viking gaped at beholding the second person who had appeared. A short-sleeved, white coat waved in the breeze, edged with red flames along the bottom with a line of writing running vertically up the back.

Minato Namikaze crouched before the cloaked man, a dagger gripped tightly in each hand and his blue eyes glaring icily. No words were spoken between the two as they tensed then charged towards each other. Hiccup watched as the two men clashed before a tug at his consciousness pulled him away, towards the evacuating civilians. His attention was caught by a brief glimpse of long red haired darting around a corner.

"Lady Kushina!" a voice cried out as he entered the alleyway. Said woman stood with Naruto still cradled in her arms, now wide awake and frightened. Several men stood around them, each wearing green vests and inscribed metal plates tied to their foreheads.

"Lord Hokage gave us orders to ensure that you were safely in the hidden bunker, m'lady!" Kushina only nodded in reply. One of the soldiers attempted to remove Naruto from her arms, but the woman turned, denying him access whilst flashing an angry glare.

"My son stays with me!" she hissed. Hiccup blinked at seeing the righteous indignation in her stance, and couldn't help but smile when the warriors took a step back.

"Y-yes, Lady Hokage!" They began to make their way hurriedly to what appeared to be a remote safe-house on the edge of the village. One

soldier quickly unlocked and wrenched open the heavy, metal door. Hiccup followed the group as they descended down a winding flight of steps. Naruto's whimper echoed in the heavy dimness. Kushina gently hushed him and increased her pace. They proceeded through several doors and gateways, each locked with a series of cryptic mechanisms.

"Wh-where are we, Mommy?" Naruto finally gained the courage to ask.

"We're in a very safe place, honey. Your Daddy had it made for us to hide in if we needed to."

"But why are we hiding?" They had finally reached a medium-sized room, with low hanging ceilings, and numerous sets of bedding materials, clothing, food, and water lining the walls. The warriors locked and barred the entrance once they had all entered. Kushina settled herself onto a floor mat before answering her son.

"Did you see that big shadow, Naruto?"

"Y-yeah. What was it?"

"Something very evil, dear. I kind of dragon that we haven't seen since the beginning of the Great War. You remember, Madara, from your history lessons? Well, it's said that he, himself rode on one of those dragons."

"D-dragon?" Hiccup's eyebrow rose when the red-headed woman muttered angrily under her breath as her son sat upright, eyes glittering excitedly.

"A dragon? Like Kurama?"

"No, Naruto." Her stern voice surprising him. "That dragon is nothing like Lord Kurama. It's a dangerous creature only capable of bringing pain and sadness."

"But maybe he just needs a friend! Let me go out there! I'll help him like I did for the others-"

"Naruto! Forget it! I'm sorry, honey, but despite your gift this is not a dragon that you could ever befriend." The blond-haired child sniffled at his mother's words.

"Bu-but you and Daddy said that dragons are good!" Kushina sighed tiredly.

"Most dragons are good, Naru, but there are a few that are very, very bad. Things have been done to them to make them forget who they truly are. Because of that they are no longer dragons, but are the Fallen. Please, promise you won't ever go looking for one of the Fallen."

"I-I...I promise, Mommy." The woman smiled and tapped him gently on the nose.

"Thank you, now get some sleep, Naru. You'll need to be strong for tomorrow, after all, there will be lot's of work to do the fix up the village after the fight is over."

"Okay, but when will Daddy be back?" Kushina looked away as she answered, not meeting her son's blue eyes.

"Soon, honey," she spoke softly. "Soon." Silence reigned for several minutes before the soldiers suddenly stiffened. They all froze, Hiccup included, who strained his ears to try and detect the noise again. A low rumble echoed through the stone chamber before everything went deathly still. A scream tore itself from Kushina's throat as long claws burst down through the ceiling. The soldiers began hollering orders to each other, encircling the woman and her child who had been abruptly awoken once more. Before they could move, the top of the room was wrenched away, along with several layers of metal, wood, and earth. Instead of seeing the starlit, night sky, their vision was enveloped in the horrifying sight of a dragon, different than the first.

Hundreds of teeth lined its jaws, even spilling out of it's mouth. Multiple spider-like limbs with long talons, protruded from its sides, several of which held the enormous chunk it had removed. Hooked mandibles chittered in front of the beast's face and a large, drill-like tail thudded behind it. In an instant, a scaley arm reached down into their midst, and before Kushina knew what had happened, she was looking up into her son's panicked face as the creature pulled him from her. She leapt to her feet in a desperate effort to grab him, shrieking as tears began to run down her face.

"NARUTO!"

* * *

><p>AN:**

Oh...My...Gosh...I can't believe I actually wrote that. This must have be THE darkest chapter I have ever created in my LIFE. I honestly got kind of sick when describing certain things. Whew. I know I rated this fic a T...but should I put it at an M?

So, for the first dragon, think:

Mouth and eyes like the Gedo Mazo (Naruto) but with the head shape of Smaug (The Hobbit)

Body like Dara Amadyura (Monster Hunter)

Wings and front limbs like an Archdemon (Dragon Age)

Back legs and tail like Alduin (Skyrim)

And for the second one it's basically a mash up of the Sea Monster from Voyage of the Dawn Treader and a couple Monster Hunter dragons that I came up with on the fly.

What do you think?

7. Chapter 7: Bonds

A/N:

"I'm not dead yet!"

Seriously, I'm not. Sosososososo sorry for the wait! I'll try to do better, I promise. Anywhoozles, here's Chapter 7. I hope you enjoy! As always comments, ideas, and constructive criticism are welcome. Also, there's a new poll up on my profile! If you haven't noticed, I absolutely adore hearing from all of you and getting your opinions. The poll is about what the people of the Hidden East should be called. I have a few ideas, but I could really use your help. Thanks a bunch!

Now on with the story!

* * *

><p>Hiccup had only felt truly helpless a handful of times during his existence. The first had been when he'd met Toothless, and the dragon had spared his life. The second had occurred as he watched his father sail away with the viking fleet towards the dragon Queen's nest, with his best friend a prisoner among them. The third time was when the mysterious dragon rider had taken him away, leaving Toothless behind, struggling to stay afloat in frigid waters. And finally, the fourth had been the split second moment when he watched his father make the ultimate sacrifice to save Hiccup's life during the Dragon War.<p>

This, however, was different. The viking chieftain knew this was merely a vision. He knew all that he now beheld was from the past. Yet the green-eyed man still struggled to hold back the tears as he desperately wished to stop what was happening before his very eyes. Kushina's scream had shaken him to his core, but it was Naruto's reaction that tore apart his soul. The boy hadn't wailed as the vile creature pulled him away from his mother's arms. He hadn't cried, kicked, or screamed in fear. The boy's ocean-colored orbs had remained locked onto Kushina's as his small body hung frozen from the monster's talon.

"Mommy?" The gasped whisper was filled with terror, and cut through the air despite its quiet tone. Suddenly, Kushina began to glow. An unearthly red light surrounded her and those long ruby locks began to lift into the air, waving about as though having a life of their own. The woman's violet gaze was hard and her body shook with unleashed rage. As she spoke, her words grew in intensity and volume.

"Let...Go...Of...MY...SON!" Crimson tinged chains burst forth from her outstretched hands, wrapping tightly around the dragon's arm. Ethereal flames came to life along the length of metal, speedily dancing up each link until they reached the end. Fire engulfed the beast's limb and it let out a roar of pain and fury. The chains tightened and the heat increased, until the appendage was cleanly severed. The dragon staggered back as the spider-like wrist fell, Naruto still clutched in its long, black claw. A shrill scream escaped the child as he dropped, before a flash of blue edged lightning flared around him.

Hiccup blinked at the bright light before narrowing his gaze at the man holding Naruto's shaking body in his arms. He was covered in dark blue clothing from his eyes down, a cloth band covered his left eye

and held back a shock of silver hair. Naruto turned in his grasp and clasped small arms around the blue-clad neck.

"Uncle Kakashi!" This time his sob was filled with relief.

"Don't worry, Naruto. I've got you," Kakashi replied in a deep, even tone. Hiccup let out a breath he been unknowingly holding.

"Kakashi!" Kushina gasped as the flaming chains and the glow encompassing her faded. "Thank the gods." She threw her arms around the man and her son once they descended. Naruto buried his nose into the crook of her neck as he was passed to her.

"M-Mommy," his voice shook. "Th-the dragon!" Kushina petted his hair gently to calm him.

"I know, baby, I know you're scared-"

"N-no!" The woman was startled by her son's sharp interruption. She gazed into his wide blue eyes, noting the rather strange look within them. "There was n-nothing!" he continued.

"What-"

"I t-ried to talk to him, b-but there was nothing there! His...his mind was dark...and empty. Mommy, what's the matter with him? Why can't he hear me?" Hiccup's heart nearly broke at the child's precious innocence, a sentiment apparently shared by both Kushina and Kakashi.

"Naru, honey-" Whatever she was going to say went unheard as a dreadful roar shattered the air around them. They looked back up at the dragon as the creature writhed in enraged agony. Without hesitation, the men leapt to engage the beast. Hiccup's mind whirled as he watched the soldiers battle not only with swords and knives, but with the very elements as well. Covered in lightning, Kakashi continued to dart about the dragon, inflicting numerous wounds. The others assisted him, throwing about whips of fire, orbs of water, and even large spires of earth. Hiccup couldn't help but wonder if these people were even mortal at all. Kakashi broke away and ran over to the mother and child, huddling in the corner.

"Kushina, we need to-" He abruptly stopped, his one uncovered eye widening in alarm. The red-headed woman stiffened as well, and they both turned back to the battle currently raging above them. The warriors seemed to have the upper hand against the dragon, and for a moment it appeared as though they had defeated it. But the sudden appearance of a cloaked man in their midst changed everything. It wasn't the same man as before, Hiccup noted. The long black cloak was identical, but he had short, spiky black hair and his face was hidden behind an orange swirled mask with only one eye hole. Before they could blink, the stranger had slain several of the guards, stabbing, crushing, and slicing them apart with spear-like wooden branches that seemed to grow from within his sleeves. He turned to them and spoke in an emotionless, monotone voice, his one crimson eye staring directly at Naruto.

"So...this is the Sage's legacy?" Behind the intruder, the dragon had settled down, as if awaiting orders whilst the man continued. "It

appears as though his vision was correct then." Kakashi glared at him, heatedly.

"Who are you?" he demanded."

"I am no one. I merely came to claim what is rightfully mine." He raised a hand to point directly at the blond-haired child. "Give me the boy and the Scroll of Secrets, and I will end the attack on your village." Instead of replying, Kakashi threw knife towards the man with lightning precision. But instead of moving, the man stood there, letting the attack hit him directly before the weapon passed completely through his body. However, there was no blood, no gaping wound. To the utter shock of those watching, the intruder was completely uninjured. Kushina gasped in realization.

"He wields the Void!" The silver-haired man suddenly pushed her to the side, narrowly avoiding the piercing branches that had shot towards her.

"Kushina," he yelled out, blocking another attack. "Get out of here! I'll hold him off!" She nodded and moved to escape when roots burst from the ground around her.

"I'm afraid I can't allow that to happen." The man intoned blankly. The wooden appendages were inches away from mother and child when blue lightning flashed in a dizzying array, leaving the roots to fall uselessly to the ground carved into dozens of limp fragments.

"Go!" With that last cry, Kakashi leapt to engage the attacker as Kushina fled with her child. Hiccup watched as the two men were seconds from contact when he once again felt himself being pulled away from the scene.

In an instant, he was standing in what could only be describe as a tomb, a thing Hiccup had only heard of in passing from travelers and tradesman. The mausoleum was crafted of beautiful white stone and its halls seemed to stretch on forever in endless shadows. Statues lined pale walls, silent sentinels for the rows of dusty tombs. Carvings depicted heroic battles, peaceful harvests, and busy festivals. But what caught his eye was Naruto standing next to his mother as she inspected a seemingly plain wall. Hiccup gaped when her hand disappeared within the wall itself before, with a quiet groan, the stone moved aside.

He followed them into the dimly lit room and blinked at the thousands of scrolls that were neatly stacked from floor to ceiling. Kushina ignored them, walking instead towards one particular corner with Naruto following silently after her. She quickly shuffled through a large pile, pushing it aside in order to reach into the further depths of the shelf. Her hands reemerged gripping an immense scroll, bound with a blood-red ribbon and a royal blue wax seal. Hiccup managed to glimpse that same leaf-like spiral insignia that he had seen all over the village, embedded into the hardened resin.

"Mommy?" Naruto whispered. Kushina turned to her son, her face conflicted yet resolute.

"Naruto, I have something I need you to do." She carefully placed the scroll into his arms, leaving him nearly buckling under its weight.

"This scroll is very important. No matter what, I need you to keep it safe. Understand?"

"But, why-"

"Naruto. Your father and I have been expecting this attack." Both Hiccup's and the child's eyes widened tremendously. "We knew this might one day happen, and we came up with a plan in case it did." She tapped the rolled up parchment in his hands. "This is what they are after. It holds many secrets, Naruto, and we can't let them take it. So, here's what we're going to do." She began to lead him back towards the room's entrance. "Once we leave here, we'll be sneaking out to the edge of the village. Then, I need you to call for Kurama." Naruto blinked at the mention of his friend.

"Kurama? Is he going to help us fight?"

"No."

"But-"

"No, Naruto. As soon as he comes, I want you and him to take the scroll and leave." The child stopped dead in his tracks, mouth open in shock. Kushina's face remained a mask of stoic determination, but Hiccup could see a gleam of sorrow hidden within the depths of her violet gaze. Her voice was steady as she continued.

"When Lord Kurama arrives, tell him this phrase, word for word. 'The wind and whirlpool end the war to let the maelstrom run with the flame.' Repeat it to me so I know you can remember it."

"But Mommy-"

"You're a smart boy, Naru. I know you can do it. I'm trusting you with this. It's a mission, just like Daddy and Uncle Kakashi always talk about. Now, what was the phrase?" The boy repeated it word for word, stuttering slightly. Kushina smiled gently at him.

"Good boy, remember those words. Kurama will know what they mean." With that, she strode through the doorway, Naruto shuffling along behind her. Hiccup followed them silently, a feeling of unease growing in the pit of his stomach. It wasn't lessened when he witnessed the silent tear that ran down the woman's cheek. They quickly went up a flight of stone steps and out the entrance of the mausoleum. Hiccup looked around to see that they had emerged into a sprawling plot of land, dotted with small square stones. He realized that this must be a graveyard. The viking had never seen one before and studiously examined the rows of markers as they passed them. This aspect of foreign cultures had always intrigued him, having been raised with the idea that only through burning a body could a soul truly be freed to ascend to Valhalla.

Hiccup blinked as the vision blurred, swirling into a haze of colors. Everything cleared to show Kushina and Naruto now slipping quietly along, darting up and down pathways between strangely shaped buildings. The chieftain realized they were now at the very edge of the village, far away from the battle. They stopped and the woman turned, kneeling in front of her son.

"Now don't forget what I told you," she reminded him as she adjusted

the straps holding the large scroll across his back. Naruto's tears were mirrored in her own eyes. Kushina gave him a watery smile.

"Be brave, honey. Be brave like your father, uncle, godfather, and grandfather."

"Yes, Mommy." She pulled a second scroll from within the depths of her robe and handed it to him.

"This scroll has food, water, clothes, and a few other things sealed inside. Use your chakra to open it, just like we taught you." Naruto sniffed loudly and nodded.

"Remember to eat and drink well, and bathe whenever you can, but don't forget to wash behind your ears." Kushina's voice cracked. "Listen to Lord Kurama's instructions, he'll help keep you safe. Also, make sure to keep the scroll close, don't let anyone take it from you." She paused to clasp her son tightly in her arms.

"Remember the creed, Naruto. 'Never give in, never give up. Defend the weak, and aid the strong. Live for life, live for truth, live for love.' That's the way of the Uzukaze. Remember that your father and I love you with all our hearts."

"Yes, we do." The two of them turned to see Minato jump down from a nearby roof. Kushina breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing her husband.

"Did I forget anything?" Minato shook his head.

"No." Ice blue eyes locked with crystal cerulean as father and son gazed at each other. The man's lips twitched upwards into a smile. "Naruto, listen to your motor-mouth mother." The red-headed woman huffed and rolled her eyes in mock annoyance. Naruto giggled at his parent's actions, the tension and fear in his expression eased slightly.

"Did you beat the bad guys, Daddy?" Minato grinned lightly and ruffled the child's spiky golden locks.

"For now, yes. Hiruzen and your godfather have the situation handled for now." The boy's eyes lit up at his words.

"Godfather is here?" Minato nodded.

"He wanted it to be surprise for your birthday. But I'm afraid this is a little more than any of us anticipated." He clasped a hand on his son's shoulder. "Naruto, it's time. Call Lord Kurama." Naruto opened his mouth to object, but was silenced by a glance from Minato.

"Ok." The child closed his eyes and brought both hands together, palms flat against each other, in front of his chest. He took a slow, deep breath. For a brief moment, silence rang over the destruction and chaos. Then Naruto's eyes snapped open, his pupils now vertical slits over an azure background. The sound that came from the small mouth penetrated Hiccup to his very center. A cry unlike any other he'd ever heard rang through the air. A scream, a roar, all mixed as one. It pulled at the viking's heart and brought forth every ounce of parental instinct within him. In an instant he knew its nature; for

all babes, no matter the creature, have one special call. The call meant to bring help, affection, nurture, sustenance. It was at that moment that Hiccup finally understood just how strong the bond between Naruto and Kurama really was. Just as you have father and son, they were dragon and hatchling. They were family.

Naruto's cry ended and he slouched down, panting. None of them spoke as they waited. But a minute had scarcely passed before the atmosphere changed. A slight thrill ran through the air, reminding Hiccup of the winds before one of Thor's storms. Expectancy hung heavy around them, its weight bearing down on their bodies. Then, Naruto seemed to perk up, sensing something the others couldn't. A bright grin spread across his lips.

"He's here."

8. Chapter 8: The Ultimate Sacrifice

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><p>AN:**

"I'm not dead yet!" Seriously, I'm not. I won't bother and befuddle you all with exaggerated excuses or ridiculous reasons for my literary lateness. Tee hee, that was a fun sentence. However, I do apologize for the long period between updates. This chappie was a serious PAIN IN THE PETUNIA to write. Blegh. Now, on to other matters...

OH. MY. GOODNESS. Over 200 followers, over 200 favorites, 121 reviews, and over 10,000 views...You are all so amazing! Thank you, thank you, thank you for your support! Cyber hugs!

Anywhoozles. T*he votes are in. Looks like Ryuhito wins! Thank you all for voting!**

Thank you to Guest (wish I knew who you were) and Icha icha Minato Kyuubi (can I just do IIMK for short?) for your challenges! Guest wants to see Naruto as a 'humanoid dragon.' I can only assume your speaking in relation to him being a 'humanoid fox' at certain times in canon. Yes, like in the manga/anime, he will take on certain characteristics of the dragon, but don't expect him to be all like "Rawr, I'm gonna grow wings and a tail and flyyyyyyy!"

**...Ok, I actually laughed at that mental image. Back to the present. Mainly it will be centered around the face. As for IIMK's request, let's just say there's going to be an uber adorkable and funny chapter in the future. XD **

Big thank you to yukicrewger2, animelvr975, and anyone else who has helped me with the language translations. Again, I don't know Japanese or Norwegian, so if there's mistakes you can blame Google Translate. ;P

Now let's get on with the show!...er story!

* * *

><p>A dull ache grew within Hiccup's mind as the vision dissolved into a whirlwind of images, sounds, and sensations. He glimpsed the fiery red scales of Kurama descending upon the village, the family of three hugging each other as tears poured down their faces, Naruto resisting as his parents placed him on the lithe reptilian back, the dragon ascending only to be cut off by the hauntingly evil image of the monster from before, now ridden by both of the black-cloaked men. Screams, cries, and shouts rang through the air as Hiccup's head pounded incessantly. He watched Naruto and Kurama escape as Kushina and Minato fought the invaders. He saw many other soldiers, including Kakashi and a man with a long mane of spiky white hair, attempt to assist them only to be held back by a translucent and glowing crimson barrier.<p>

The chieftain's stomach rolled as the onslaught became too much to bear. Bile rose in his throat as he helplessly gazed at the battle, unable to cry out as he beheld the horrific spikes that pierced both bodies, causing blood and gore to fly through the air. A last flash of pure light filled the skies before Minato and Kushina slumped limply to the ground. Tears ran down the face of his astral form as the invaders disappeared along with the luminescent wall, allowing those standing by to rush in. Hopelessness hung heavy around them all as liquid red poured, buildings collapsed, and fire raged. Unable to stand it any longer, Hiccup began to plead with every god he could think of to end this horrific visage. But it was another primordial being who answered his desperation.

In an instant, the viking once again found himself on the hillside of Berk, sprawled out on the cool, dewy grass as he gasped and sobbed. Toothless was panicking, nuzzling frantically at his rider's writhing form and whining brokenly at the great, flame-colored Ancestral. Kurama's eyes were full of understanding as he stooped down. The Night Fury backed away reluctantly as he drew near the weeping man, smoke escaping his nostrils as he blew a hot breath of air over Hiccup. The warmth gradually seeped into the viking, calming his tears and easing the pain within his head. Slowly, carefully, he looked up into the dragon's wizened gaze. He beheld sorrow, pain, understanding, knowledge, and even regret in those red orbs. An unprecedented calm overcame him as Kurama's voice spilled softly into his mind.

"**"My apologies. Your spirit was beginning to lose hold on reality, so I was forced to hurry the last part of the memory viewing."** Hiccup comprehended the Ancestral's words, yet was more preoccupied with the realization that the dragon seemed to be easier to understand.

"**"A result of the technique,"** Kurama spoke, reading the chieftain's unspoken question. _**"Having our minds linked allowed for the transference of language. You will be able to understand our words more readily, and due to the fact that we were connected with Naruto as well, he will also be affected by this."**_

"H-he'll understand us?"

"Not wholly, no. But he will likely grasp your language quicker than he would have otherwise. The same applies to you."

"I see." Silence fell over the three of them, Hiccup going over what had occurred while the dragon's watched him carefully. After several minutes, the young man finally broke the reigning quiet. "Kurama, you could have spoken to all of us in Gothi's hut, earlier. Why didn't you?" The dragon considered his words carefully before replying.

"**"It was for Naruto's sake. Trust and love are most precious to him. Back in his homeland, Naruto had a select few he truly held ties with, namely his parents, uncle, godparents and a grandfather-like figure. But other than myself, he had no friends. The boy's status among the villagers prevented many from fully accepting him. Due to his parentage, some treated him like royalty which he despised. Others feared his gifts and talents, thinking them unnatural and inhuman. Besides his family, I am the only being who has ever treated him for what he truly is: a child. That is, until you came along. There were no pretensions in your first meeting, only honesty and understanding. You have already forged the beginnings of a bond with the hatchling. I was merely attempting to strengthen it."** Hiccup nodded and stood, dusting the grass off of his legs.

"Thank you, Kurama," he murmured quietly. The ancient creature merely nodded before settling his great head upon massive front limbs and returning to slumber. Shakily, Hiccup strapped himself into Toothless' saddled and they took off.

The chieftain couldn't help but wonder at how long he had been trapped within the memory. The sun seemed to be much lower in the sky than he could last recall, the rays of light shining golden and orange as it set. However, his thoughts were still hazy and he did not make the effort to dwell on it further. Toothless continued to fly around the island in great, majestic circles and they both relished in the quiet serenity. It wasn't long, though, before they were interrupted by the loud echo of bickering voices carried on the wind. Watching the three figures draw closer, Hiccup let out a frustrated sigh, albeit with a slight smile as he listened to Eren and Gobber debating this and that whilst Astrid grumbled in annoyance.

"I'm tellin' ya lad, the brace needs ta rise higher in the front, so's ya can hold yeself when divin'."

"An' I say to have it higher in the back, thats where ya need support! Leanin' back is the way to go when diving and climbing, after all."

"No, no, no. Ya lean forward!"

"Back!"

"Forward!"

"Back!"

"Forward!"

"Back!"

"Forw-"

"FOR THE LOVE OF FREYA, PUT A SOCK IN IT!" Astrid's temper and tongue had finally gotten the better of her and Hiccup couldn't help but burst into laughter, alerting them to his presence. The weight that had pressed so heavily upon him lifted and he formed a genuine grin.

"Are these ruffians troubling you, m'lady?" The lovely maiden played along, raising her nose in the air and replying in a haughty tone.

"Yes, they are. In fact, I feel that they ought to be punished, oh mighty chief!" Hiccup pretended to consider her words.

"Indeed. Very well, extra shifts of hatchling duty it is then." Both of the men wore an face of abject horror upon hearing this.

"Oh, that's just cruel chief!"

"Anythin' but that 'iccup!"

"Would you rather be on Thorston duty?" Neither warrior replied, choosing instead to spur their dragons on in a sudden fit of speed as they rushed past, heading straight for the newly built Nursery. Astrid sniggered at their reaction.

"Thorston duty?" Hiccup shrugged with a wry smirk.

"Well someone needs to keep an eye on the twins." The laughter of the two riders echoed in the cold air, as the sun sunk below far horizon.

* * *

><p>Kurama had remained in a state of meditative silence ever since the viking's departure, slowly mulling over the encounter. He analyzed each word and gesture they had exchanged, weighing them against his current knowledge and experience. He let out a deep breath, curls of hot air escaping his mouth between wickedly sharp teeth.<p>

The man, although young, was honest and wise for his age. Kurama could sense the viking's genuine desire to help his hatchling. This would be of benefit to him. As the Sanctuary was no longer a viable hiding place, this Isle would have to do. Those of the TÅ•kai Azuma were extremely suspicious of the viking people, or Baikingu, as they called them. Konoha's enemies were unlikely to ever consider that they would willingly hiding among them. Kurama chuckled mentally, thinking it rather fitting that the name translated into a reference for the people's rather interesting eating habits.

The Ancestral delved deeper into his mind, navigating mental pathways and passages of solid stone, marbled with a variety of earthen colors and patterns. He spotted his target just ahead, a massive archway, lined with archaic symbols carved precisely into the living rock. Growling deep within his chest, he blew a sharp line of fire onto the carvings. They lit up in a brilliant orange before transforming into dazzling hues of plum, gold, opal, silver, maroon, olive, sapphire, and bronze. The colors swirled across the arch, blending and melding

together.

A delicate webbing spread across the opening, shifting constantly like the surface of a rippling pond. His spell complete, Kurama strode onward, ignoring the way the web clung to each scale as it passed over his body. The passage opened up into a round, cavernous space. The stone floor divided by a series of sculpted lines into nine unique spaces. Each was decorated with a separate motif; sandy dunes, flames, waves, craggy rocks, hoofprints, bubbles, twisted vines, a great curved horn, and lastly a circular swirl with wavy lines of writing extending from it like a sun.

Standing above the inscriptions were eight dragons. Kurama settled his blood-red gaze on each of them in turn. On the far left stood a dragon with two triangular ears, golden eyes with a diamond shaped pupil, a round yet jagged muzzle, and scales that constantly shifted like sandy plains. Next came an almost feline creature, with curved claws, beautifully lethal fangs, mismatched eyes, and blue scales in the shape of miniature flames. The third dragon bore a spiked shell across its back which extended into three jagged tails, and its face held an overly large, protruding jaw. Fourth stood a reptile with a strangely ape-like build, two enormous canines jutting out from beneath its lips, and a pair of horns atop its head. Fifth came a creature with four spikes protruding from behind the jaw and atop the head, along with five flowing tails with a furry appearance and strange, hoof-like feet. The sixth dragon had a rounded, pudgy body which was covered in a opalescent slime, and two eye-stalks that swiveled around curiously from its head. In the seventh position fluttered an insect-like beast, with six leafy wings and a twisting green tail. Eighth stood a dragon with slick, plum-colored skin, a bull shaped face, and eight tentacle-like tails covered in rows of white circles. Kurama examined each closely, having not seen any of them in centuries. After all, it was not often that the situation warranted the gathering of all nine Ancestrals.

"Brother," the first, sandy skinned dragon growled out. "Why have you summoned us together?" The eldest Ancestral turned his red gaze to his youngest sibling.

"Shukaku, it has been many years since we last spoke. But I wouldn't have called you all unless the matter was of great importance." The feline creature with fiery blue scales tilted her head slightly.

"We know that, Kurama." she purred. "The Council of Nine is only gathered for matters pertaining to both dragon-kind and humans alike."

"Indeed," piped up the white, slime covered dragon. "Matatabi is right. What do you need our help with?" The nine-tailed reptile's eyes hardened in determination and he reared his head up proudly.

"Our predecessor foretold of a time when death would descend upon wings of bone to slay the blood of the ancient. That time is now upon us." The eighth dragon looked up sharply.

"You don't meanâ€¦"

"Yes, the Karitoriki RyÅ« has appeared." Kurama allowed his lips to curl up slightly, revealing a cunning and wry smirk. "And so has the

Child of Prophecy."

* * *

><p>After escorting Astrid home, Hiccup wearily strode up the path leading to his own hut. After stepping inside, he noticed the hearth fire dwindling down to mere embers. He frowned, brown brows furrowing, for he knew his mother would never let this occur with their guest in such fragile condition.<p>

"Toothless," Hiccup called quietly, motioning to the dying flames. The black dragon crooned happily and shot a single plasmic spark into the fireplace. Hiccup smiled at him, receiving a gummy grin in return. "Good job, bud." Leaving the main floor, the viking ascended the steps towards his room. Upon opening the door, he was surprised to see his mother laying in the small bed, her back against the headboard and long legs stretched out. A soundly sleeping Naruto lay cuddled up in her arms, his soft snores of contentment escaping with each exhale. The chieftain recalled Kurama's earlier mentioning of what the child had been suffering.

"Nightmare?" he questioned in a whisper. His mother nodded.

"Aye, and it was a bad one from what I can tell. It took a fair bit to calm him." Hiccup's curiosity was piqued.

"How so?" Valka looked slightly flustered at the question.

"Well, ya see, I sang a lullaby my own mother taught me. Its the same one I would sing to you as a babe when you were frightened by Thor's storms." Hiccup blinked.

"You did?" he felt a small pang in his heart. "I wish I could remember." Valka listened to the pain in her son's voice as he trailed off.

"Hiccup, son. I know that I caused a great deal of grief for you in your life, and I know these past several days have been a challenge. Finding your mother, losin' your father, fighting a war, becomin' chief, rebuilding the village, and now carin' for a wounded and frightened child. But I want, no, I need ya to know that I will be here for you now. I want ta help you, Hiccup." The young man watched as tears gathered in her meadow green eyes, and he choked on the emotion welling in his throat.

"Mom, I know you regret not having the chance to be there for me, to raise me. But...I'm asking you to be there for me now and to help me raise Naruto." Valka seemed puzzled by his choice of words.

"Raise him? What of his family, son?"

"I...spoke, if you will, with Kurama." The viking chief looked sorrowfully at the small child before continuing. "Naruto's parents made the ultimate sacrifice in order to ensure his escape upon the outbreak of war in his homeland." His mother gasped, horrified.

"So, he's an orphan?"

"Yes, and the Ancestral wishes for us to let him stay here if he wants to." Valka regarded her son carefully, looking him in the

eye.

"You already see him as family, don't you?" Hiccup blushed at her words.

"How could I not? Naruto is just a child, he needs someplace safe. Besides he's amazing with the dragons, mom! He's also clever, and a skilled artist, and very curious."

"Along with hair and eyes like a certain maiden you're fond of." Valka mentioned, and Hiccup's face reddened even further, if that were possible.

"Wh-what?" She winked at him.

"I'm just teasing, but really Hiccup. Are you ready for something like this? I know I'm not really one to talk, but caring for a child is no easy job."

"Of that, I have no doubt. But I know I can do it, I have you here with me after all." The woman's eyes widened as he spoke, moistening once again. At times, their relationship was tenuous due to it being so foreign for both. But it had been progressing, and Valka's heart soared at the chance to regain time with her only child.

"Thank you, Hiccup." He merely smiled in reply, pulling up a chair beside the bed and settling down. He carefully brushed a golden lock from off the boy's forehead, wincing at the bruises and cuts still littering his face, coloring it indigo and grey with sickly yellow undertones.

"Who could do something like this?" Valka laid a hand on his, rubbing it lightly.

"A madman, Hiccup. A madman." She moved and pushed his shoulder. "Now, it's gettin' late and you have lot's of work in the morn'. Best head off ta bed, now. I'll look after him tonight." Hiccup nodded tiredly and stood, giving one long stretch to ease the stiffness that had settled into his body.

"Good idea, goodnight Mom." No matter how often it occurred, Valka still felt a thrill of joy course through her whenever her son addressed her by that title.

"Goodnight, Hiccup. I love you." He paused in the doorway and turned to look back at her, before whispering in an emotion filled voice.

"I love you, too." Moments later Hiccup tumbled into his own bed, falling asleep the moment his head hit the pillow.

* * *

><p>AN:**

So, what do you think? Please remember that I don't actually have a beta. All of my work is written and edited solely by myself, so if you notice grammatical, spelling, punctuation, or plot errors, please let me know.

9. Chapter 9: The Scroll

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* * *

><p>AN:**

It's fiiiiiiiiiiiiinally heeeeeeeeeere! Thank you sososososososo much for your patience. I'm really sorry this chapter took so long to write but I ended up re-writing it (no joke) 12 stinking times! It just was refusing to be typed out despite the fact that it was all together in my head. But, hope this new bit makes up for it. Thank you every one for your support! Love you all!

* * *

><p>"Kurama Mental
Speech"_

"Thought/Translation of Japanese or Norwegian"

* * *

><p>The gentle sensation of long fingers running through his hair was the first thing Naruto noticed upon rising from the depths of sleep. A familiar scent hung in the air around him along with the comforting hum of a woman's lyrical voice. The small child breathed a long sigh and attempted to snuggle further into the surrounding warmth which produced a small chuckle and a tightening of the arms around him.<p>

Crystalline blue orbs opened gradually, their lashes fluttering. The room swam into focus before him, showing dark wooden walls and furnishings carved with foreign patterns. He gazed around looking for the owner of those fingers he had felt only moments ago. But there was no one in sight other than the small dragon curled on the blanket next to him. Naruto blinked in surprise upon noticing the creature. Thorny spines ran jaggedly down its skinny body and small leathery wings were wrapped tightly around itself. Two twisted horns, along with large nostrils and eyes, characterised its rather round head. The scales were of a dark blue color, which faded into green along the limbs and arrow shaped tail.

The dragon must have felt the boy's gaze for it soon woke, opening bright eyes of an astonishing blue shade. It yawned widely, letting out a cute squeak at the end and snuffling slightly. Naruto sat frozen, watching the animal in earnest. He had never seen such a small dragon that was so obviously an adult. Gnawing on his lip, the boy continued to gaze at the dragon, who stared back in return.

"H-hello?" Naruto reached out with his mind, curious at to whether this dragon bore any resemblance to those of his homeland. No reply greeted him, and the creature showed no outward reaction.

"Hello?" he tried again, this time louder.

"**"It's no use, hatchling."** The ancient being's voice cut through the quiet.

"Huh?"

"**"The Arrowtail cannot speak to you. His kind has long forgotten the old ways."**

"Ohâ€¦|" Naruto pondered on this for a time, before a thought occurred to him. _"What about the black one?"_

"**"The Night Stalker? He's different. They are not like other dragons. His species bears a much stronger line of blood memories. He has not forgotten completely, it is simply a vague instinct for him now."**

"Why's that?"

"**"Because they are descended from my own line, and I am the first born of the Ancestrals. Now, you may not be able to communicate with this Arrowtail in the manner you are used to, but there are other ways."** Naruto tilted his head in confusion.

"What do you mean?" Kurama chuckled deeply.

**_"Why don't you take a look and see for yourself."_ **The child's eyes settled on the dragon before him and the Ancestral's meaning became clear. The tiny creature had its head cocked to the side, mimicking the boy's perfectly. Curious, the boy leaned to the opposite side, a move immediately copied by the blue-eyed dragon. Letting out a slight giggle, Naruto continued to play the strange game, a smile growing on his face. The small reptile paused, narrowing its eyes at the child's expression, before attempting to lift its own lips in a twisted sort of grin. Following deeply rooted instincts, Naruto stretch out his hand slowly towards his companion. Without hesitation the beast nuzzled into the tiny fingers, nose huffing hot air as it sniffed contentedly. The boy began carefully stroking the blue and green scaled body, giggling once again when the dragon leaned into his hand so far that it fell over onto its side. Cautiously he ran a hand over the exposed stomach, feeling the internal heat that radiated from within its belly. A snort came from the dragon as it stilled under his touch, and warmth bloomed in Naruto's chest as he watched the beautiful creature fall asleep. Kurama's rumbling voice interrupted his thoughts.

**_"What shall you name him, hatchling."_ **Naruto pondered for a moment, running over several possibilities in his mind before settling upon one.

"He's a connection, so...Kone."

* * *

><p>Hiccup couldn't believe what he was seeing. In all the years he had worked with dragons, never before had something like this occurred. The morning had started out as usual. He'd woken in his bed to the rumbling of the Night Fury. Toothless had nuzzled him into consciousness, then bounded out of the room. Hiccup rose, strapped on his prosthetic, and shuffled out as well, rubbing sleep from his

eyes. He quietly peeked into the guest room to see his mother still slumbering. Memories from last night returned and he hurried up the stairs to check on the child that had already become so dear to his heart. It was upon opening the door that Hiccup experience the shock and surprise of what lay one that small bed.<p>

Child and dragon had yet to notice him, caught up in their own little world. He watched as Naruto stroked the round stomach of the Terrible Terror nestled into his side. The creature lay stretched out on its back, vital underbelly exposed. The greatest sign of trust a dragon could bestow upon anyone. For Hiccup, only Toothless had ever shown such behavior, as it was with all deep bonds between dragon and human. To see one submit so completely to an obvious stranger shocked Hiccup to his core. Kurama's words rang through his mind once again, and he found himself agreeing that here, indeed, was a truly blessed child.

Unwilling to interrupt, the chieftain stood there for several minutes, simply witnessing the bond form, until the snuffling of a Night Fury behind him broke the silence. Two pairs of blue eyes looked up and his heartbeat quickened upon seeing them both bearing reptilian slit pupils. Naruto blinked, eyes returning to normal as he registered just who stood in the doorway. A smile made its way across the boy's face.

"Hicca-san!"_ he chirped, sounding happier than Hiccup had ever heard. The scooped the Terrible Terror into his arms and held out the snoozy creature. "Kone!" he proclaimed proudly. Confusion must have shown on the vikings face because Naruto quickly elaborated. He pointed to himself then towards Hiccup, Toothless, and finally the Terrible Terror, speaking one word for each.

"Naruto, Hicca-san, Tuues-chan, Kone-chan!"_ Comprehension flickered to the forefront of Hiccup's mind. He pointed to the small dragon as he replied, carefully enunciating each portion of the name.

"Koe-nay?" Naruto beamed and nodded.

"Hai!"_ At that moment, the door behind them opened, revealing Valka bearing a large tray of steaming food.

"Are either of you boys hungry?" Twin stomach growls were her answer, and she guffawed loudly at the pink flush painting both male's cheeks. Hiccup coughed into his fist in an embarrassed fashion.

"Er, thanks Mom." She merely nodded, setting the food onto the bed beside them. She picked up a plate of smoked cod and was about to hand it to Naruto when she paused.

"Did...did he understand me?"

"What do you mean?" her son questioned.

"When I asked if'n you were hungry...he nodded." Hiccup blinked in surprise, realizing that she was right. He turned to the small child, speaking carefully.

"Naruto, nod your head if you can understand what I am saying." The blue-eyed boy hesitated before giving an affirmative shake.

"Y-yes," despite his stutter, it was clearly their own language. Both vikings smiled at this and Valka once again held out the full plate. Naruto looked at the food and his eyes grew wide.

"Fish!" Mother and son exchanged a glance.

"Do you eat fish back in...er," Hiccup searched his memory for the name Naruto had mentioned. "Konoha?" The child looked up at him, trying to answer around a mouthful before giving up and nodding for a third time. Valka took a deep breath in amazement.

"He's sure a fast learner. I thought we'd hav'ta go 'round tellin' him everthin's name, but he already has a grasp on a fair bit."

"I think it's the memory transfer Kurama mentioned. The last time we spoke, he was much easier to understand."

"Yup!" The child's happy exclamation gave them pause, and then Valka chuckled.

"Only you, Hiccup, would manage to stumble across a child as brilliant as yerself." The chieftain ducked his head in embarrassment.

"Momâ€¦" Naruto giggled at his whiny tone and stuffed another hunk of food into his mouth. His hand reached for more, catching only air. The boy stared at his empty plate in confusion then turned to the vikings.

"Gone?" Hiccup stifled a laugh.

"Yeah, you ate it all, bud." He poked the child's side, careful to not touch the bruised ribs. "Would you like more?" Blue orbs lit up at the possibility and the vikings were once again reminded of the hardship their charge had endured.

"More?" he whispered as though unbelieving of the idea. Without saying a word, Valka placed the entire tray on his lap, vaguely wondering if Naruto's eyes were capable of getting any larger.

"Eat," she intone softly. He needed no further encouragement to dig in. Hiccup watched the boy scarf down the food, uncaring as to his manners. But the young man wasn't troubled he'd seen far worse from his own tribe after all. The sat in silence as the child sated himself for the first time since his capture.

"Hey, Mom?"

"Hm?"

"He needs a bath." Both vikings looked at the child, who's eating was beginning to slow. Despite washing his wounds, the rest of Naruto's body was still filthy. Dirt and blood matted blond locks and skinny limbs. Valka nodded.

"Not surprised, seein' as what the little one's gone through. He'll be needin' new clothes as well." Up until that moment, Hiccup hadn't paid heed to what the child was wearing. Taking a moment to look, the

chieftain realized his mother was right. The tattered piece of fabric was hanging by a thread. At one point it must have been rather nice, but the hardship of captivity and travel had worn it down to almost nothing. The shape seemed to be practical and slightly loose fitting, for ease of movement, with no extra pieces that would hinder travel. The color was now a dull mix of bland colors, but must have once be layers of black and dark blue along with hints of orange. Shredded pants were now too short, and a tunic-like top was more like a dress on the boy's emaciated frame. All told, it was ill fitting for Berk's weather and terrain.

"Your right. We'll need to get him boots, too, for when he's back on his feet."

"I have a feeling that won't be long in comin'."

"Why's that?" Valka's eyes twinkled.

"Cause he seems as stubborn-headed as yerself and Stoick. Gods know he would never let an injury get 'im down, an' if you're anything like your father, the same'll be for you. Tell me, how long did ya rest after losin' that leg 'o' yours?" Hiccup flushed.

"Um, I kind of didn't." The lovely woman chuckled.

"My point exactly. This child survived what many a grown man couldn't. He'll get through this, and be far stronger for it. Now, I'm gonna go talk to Gothi and your Astrid about a few things." Standing, she picked up the now empty tray and gave the child a happy glance before leaving. Now alone, Hiccup turned back to the boy. Naruto lay reclined on the bed with a protruding stomach full of food and a look of pure contentment on his face. A laugh bubbled up within the viking at the sight. The little blond gave him a strange look, but seemed too satisfied to care otherwise. Neither said a word for several minutes, simply enjoying the quiet atmosphere. Their reverie was interrupted by a loud rumbling snore. Both males jerked to look down and the dragon sleeping once again on the bed.

"Silly, _Kobe._" Naruto murmured laying a small hand on warm scales. Hiccup felt a breath on his neck, and turned to see Toothless leaning behind him, his gaze fixated on the two tiny creatures. The chieftain blinked in realization at seeing what resembled a pout on the Night Fury's face.

"Jealous much?" The black dragon snorted, but remained where he was. "Alright, you big baby." The rider pulled his friend towards him, so that the reptile's head lay on the bed with his body resting on the floor.

"That's as close as you're going to get right now." Toothless crooned softly at the boy, gazing at him with wide, round eyes. Naruto smiled and began to pet him, rubbing from nose to ears. Harlequin orbs rolled up in contentment and the large dragon sagged into the touch. Hiccup sat back, watching in wonder. The boy had such a gift with the creatures that the viking felt as though he were a student, watching the master at work. Every move the child made seemed so at ease that Hiccup knew the boy had never in his life known such a thing as hatred for dragons.

It all made sense now, the flight from his homeland, the capture by

Drago, everything that had happened to the gentle soul was due to this beautiful gift that greedy men coveted. It wasn't control, obviously. Drago had controlled dragons, through means like fear and pain, treating them as no better than mindless weapons to be used at the wielder's discretion. Berkians had killed the creatures, seeing them as monsters, a view which changed into one of annoyance then acceptance. But this was on an entirely different level. The look in Naruto's eyes told him a story. He could see that the boy wasn't looking at members of another species, but family. Family in every way. This stunned him. Yes, his relationship with Toothless was incredible. Yes, they had truly come to love and trust one another in a way no other pair on Berk had achieved. But it was nothing compared to the scene before him. There was a reverence to the dragon's posture, something he had only seen given to the Alpha. In an instant he knew that his life would be forever changed by this child. Letting his eyes slide shut, Hiccup whispered an almost inaudible prayer.

"Gods and spirits of Asgard...Dad...give me strength. Help me protect him. Please."

Naruto felt his jaw pop as it stretched into a large yawn. Sighing, he looked down at the two dragons nuzzled beside him, as different as the night and day and yet the same. He could feel Hiccup's gaze, but knew that this man was like his parents. They always told him that eyes could never lie, and the man's forest-green gaze was one of utter honesty, along with intelligence and courage. Naruto knew he was safe, something he had not felt in a long time.

The boy looked up as the door opened, creaking on old metal hinges. The familiar figures of two women strode through and Naruto felt a smile stretch across his face. Each of them reminded him in some way of someone back home. Valka in many ways resembled his mother, with that same feeling of love and comfort around her. Astrid was like his godmother, Tsunade, she was very strong, but much quieter than Granny as far as he could tell. Naruto realized then that the blond-haired young woman carried a large, ornate scroll in her arms. His eyes widened in recognition as he met her gaze.

"_Jeg_ think _dette_ belongs to you." She strode over and placed the roll of paper on his lap, shooing away both dragons for a moment. The two creatures paused to look at Naruto, who nodded. Without hesitation they moved back, giving the humans more space. Valka's eyebrows rose at the scene, but she seemed to shrug it off a moment later. The three taller vikings worked to unravel the massive scroll. Hiccup turned when they finished and flashed him a smile.

"Ready, _knopp?"_ Naruto blinked, once again only understanding some of the words. He searched his memory for a word before replying.

"Ja." Astrid's eyes widened and she began speaking rapidly to Hiccup leaving Naruto barely comprehending her speech. Hiccup chuckled and gestured to the boy and scroll.

"Yeah, _nÅ la oss_ take a look." Naruto grinned and sat up higher, wincing briefly at the aches in his side. He took a moment to reach out to his Ancestral.

"Kurama?"

"I'm here kit."

"Can you help me with this?"

"**"Yes, give them a warning though. A presence in your mind is not an easy thing for those unprepared."**"

"Ok." Naruto gestured with a hand for Hiccup to come closer. Once within reach, he tapped the man's forehead.

"Mr. Hiccup, Kurama's going to talk to all of you." The man must have understood, because his eyes widened and he spoke a slew of words to the women beside him. Their expressions became uncertain, then settled into masks of determination.

"GÃ¸ vedere, Naruto." They had waited for several seconds when a rumbling seemed to echo through through the room.

"**"Hello, Baikingu."**" The vikings cringed at the intrusion but remained steady.

"Hei, Kurama."

"Mr. Hiccup? It's easier if you just think what you want to say." The adult's jaws dropped, a reaction that induced a laugh from the child._ "Hi!"_ he giggled.

"N-naruto?" Astrid's voice clearly spoke, followed by a stutter from Valka.

"This...this isâ€¦!"

"Yeah, pretty crazy. I felt the same way the first time."

"**"If you're finished, perhaps we can continue with the matter at hand."**"

"Oh, er, yes, Lord Kurama." The dragon seemed rather pleased with the use of his title.

"**"I'll be brief, this scroll is a record of several things. First, it gives the genealogy of Naruto's people, for the clan lines at least. It also has the tale of the Ancestrals and certain prophecies. I assume you, Hiccup, explained a part of this to the others after we spoke?"**"

"What I could, yeah."

"**"Very well, that makes the explanation much simpler. Naruto?" The boy perked up upon hearing his name."**_"

"Huh?"

"**"Show them the clan scroll."**"

"Ok!" The child eagerly shifted the paper until a large, intricate design was revealed. Naruto paused.

"Hey, Kurama?"

**"Yes, hatchling?"**

_ "Um...how do I open it again?"_ A deep sigh resounded through their minds.

**"Mold your chakra in the way your father taught you, then let it flow through the seal."**

_ "Oh, right."_ The vikings glanced at each other in confusion, obviously lost in the conversation. They could only watch as Naruto placed both hands on the seal. A poof of smoke erupted, disappearing a second later. In his hands Naruto held a second, much smaller, scroll which he tried to hand to Hiccup. The man seemed reluctant to take it.

**"I'm going to assume your people have never seen sealing techniques or chakra before?"**

_ "N-n-no!"_ Hiccup squeaked.

_ "You would call it magic, aether, or attribute it to the work of a god. In the East it's called chakra, or chi. It's a person's spiritual essence as well as physical life source combined into a wieldable power. Only those of a certain lineage are capable of its use, and some are stronger than others. Naruto is a descendant of the two brothers who were first given this ability. From them, six clans were created. From the elder brother, Hagoromo Otsusuki, came the Senju, Uzumaki, Uchiha, and Namikaze clans. From the younger, Hamura, came the Hyuuga and Hiko clans. Naruto's mother was a descendant of the Senju and Uzumaki, while his father descended from the Namikaze and Hiko. Due to this he bears the blood of both brothers. A rather powerful combination. Althoughâ€¦"_ The Ancestral paused, and the four humans could hear the sound of deep sniffing. _**"Judging by the scent of your blood, at least two of you are of the Hiko clan as well." **_The vikings stood there gaping for a moment before Hiccup broke the silence with a loud yell.

"W-what!?"

* * *

><p>Translations:

"Kone" - "Connection."

"Hai." - "Yes."

**"Jeg." - "You." **

"Dette." - "This."

"Knopp." - "Bud."

"NÃ¥ la oss." - "Now let's."

"GÃ¥ videre." - "Go ahead."

"Baikingu." - "Viking."

* * *

><p>AN:**

Yes, it's me again. Quick bit of info for you. Humans give dragons species names, however their not always what the dragons would call themselves. This is an idea I've seen in several fics that I love, so credit to anyone else with this concept. Here's a list, Left is human and Right is dragon.

Bewilderbeast - Ice Breather

Night Fury - Night Stalker

Terrible Terror - Arrowtail

Deadly Nadder - Spine Shooter

Monstrous Nightmare - Flamehide

Zippleback - Twistneck

etc. etc. etc. I'm working on creating a much larger list. Do you like them? Any changes or ideas you have for it would be delightful. Well, I'd better go, it's nearly midnight and I have work tomorrow. Oh joys. Anwhoozles, toodaloo!

~Emma J.

10. Chapter 10:Descendant of the East

Disclaimer: All rights belong to Masashi Kishimoto, Viz Media, Cressida Cowel, and DreamWorks Animation; cover art belongs to Cheif117John on deviantArt. Seriously...does anyone even read these? PM or review if you noticed the unusual edition. Cyber cookies for those who did.

* * *

><p>AN:**

YIKES! It's been, like, two months since my last update. Super sorry, peoples. But anywhoozles, I'm baaaaaaaaaack! Thank you to my wonderful readers, reviewers, and to all those who follow or have favorited my story! My heart sings every time I get a notification for a new follower!

This Chapter took foreeeeeeevah to write! So much research! GAH! Chakra, and bloodlines, and history, oh my! I did a lot of studying and brainstorming for this particular chapter, and I hope you all like it. I tried to keep as much as possible accurate will still maintaining the element of originality that I am aiming for. I feel particularly proud of the meshing that went on for this. Let me know what you think.

Thanks again everyone!

* * *

><p>"Kurama Speech."_

_ "Japanese/Mental Conversation." _

* * *

><p>It all fell into place; years of questions asked and unanswered, a lifetime of puzzles finally solved. In her heart, Valka felt sure that the gods themselves had planned this unlikely meeting.<p>

"Hiccup," she spoke softly, breaking through her son's stunned stupor. "He's right." The auburn-haired chieftain spun to face her.

"Huh?" he questioned. Valka strode out of the room, calling behind her as she went.

"Just a moment." She headed downstairs to the bedroom belonging to her late husband and moved to the wooden chest she'd discovered in the far corner, hidden beyond a large chair. The woman took a deep and bracing breath. Opening the lid with a shriek of rusty hinges, Valka glanced at the dusty contents. Dented and scratched armour minus a breastplate, a handful of books, and old clothing all lay within as mementos of a lost love kept through these long years by a grieving husband. She swallowed the lump of sorrow that threatened to consume her and removed the items one by one until only a single object remained; a flattened roll of parchment, cracked and yellowed with age.

Gingerly she fingered its edges. The stiff paper ran smoothly over her skin, and the scent of animal hide, paint, and ink rose around her. Valka sighed and scooped the bundle into her arms, setting it carefully on the empty bed. After replacing the other memory-soaked things she stood and returned to Hiccup's room, cradling her prize. The room's occupants hadn't moved, waiting patiently for an explanation. The moment the blond-haired child spied what she carried he gasped and pointed, slit-pupiled eyes narrowing even further. Recognition dawned in her son's and future daughter-in-law's eyes.

"Mom, is thatâ€|"

"Ay, it is."

"But how-"

"This scroll is an heirloom, passed down through my family for the last five generations. My mother gave it to me when I was to be married to your father. It came from my great-great-great grandfather. He was a foreigner, don't know exactly where from, but he was certainly no viking. Now...I think I understand." She set the scroll on the small bed just beyond the reach of Naruto's short legs. Cautiously, Valka peeled back the first edge, careful not to rip the aged material. Brilliant colors of ink, albeit dulled slightly with time, were revealed; coloring the paper in twirling spirals, vines, and foreign motifs. Moments later Naruto, Hiccup, and Astrid gasped as there lay a symbol known to them. A leaf, spiraling in the middle with a unique, flame-like quality to it. The little child let out a stifled sob.

_ "Konohaâ€¦" Hiccup's mouth gaped, opening and closing in his shock with Astrid faring no better. Valka traced the design with a slim finger.

"I always knew there was somethin' different about my family, somethin' unlike any other in the village. We were seen as strange folk, coming up with strange and unfamiliar ideas for viking kind. Then of course, there were the dragons." The woman sighed heavily, shoulders slumped with an invisible weight. "Ah, I remember old grandfather tellin' me stories of his days as a dragon slayer. He'd always say how they were the most amazing creature he'd ever seen, how there was an intelligence to each beast's gaze. He never like killin' em, but he did it to protect his family and tribe. Though he had a strange habit of calling it a clanâ€¦"

**"As is tradition for the TÅ•kai Azuma. Families intertwined through blood and marriage are seen as one, a clan."** The vikings flinched in surprise, having nearly forgot the Ancestral in their shock.

_ "Ä' to... Dare ga kono makimono o tsukutta nodesu ka?"_

"Huh?"

**"He wishes to know who made the scroll. You forget, he still does not know your language fully yet. Speaking through the mental link will solve that."** Valka nodded.

_ "Well, from what I understand, he changed his name upon settling down on Berk. I know of him as Kynligr Skegg."_

_ "Doesn't that mean 'strange beard'?"_ Hiccup intoned in a deadpan voice, earning him a sharp nudge from Astrid's elbow.

_ "Aye,"_ Valka chuckled. _ "According to what I've heard, the name suited him. There's a spot on the scroll where he supposedly wrote his real title, but I can't make head nor tail of it. Perhaps though, someone from his homeland can."_ She rolled open the scroll to a certain place and laid it in the blond boy's lap. His sky-colored eyes widened comically as he spotted the neatly inked inscription.

_ "Senku Hiko?! The mapmaker?!"_ he nearly yelled within their minds, causing an automatic flinch in them all. "I remember stories about him. He wanted to explore the Forbidden West, but leaving meant he could never come back."

_ "Why not?"_ Astrid questioned.

_ "Well, 'cause it's the Forbidden West!"_ The viking's eyebrows rose at the tone of obviousness from the child.

**"Those of the Hidden East tend to feel very strongly about not coming into contact with anyone outside of their lands. The desire to travel abroad is seen as a rather taboo concept."**

_ "Yup! He left anyways, though, and was ex-exi-"_

**"Exiled."**

"Yeah, that!" Hiccup felt slightly ill.

"He was banished?" Naruto nodded.

"Uh huh. No one ever knew what happened to him, though, not even our dragon scouts could find out. I learned this 'cause his brother is in my tree family."

"Tree...family?"

**"He means his ancestry, his family tree."** Naruto blushed, nodding.

"Family is important back home, Mommy and Daddy taught me all about ours. It's hard to remember everything for all four clans."

"What were they called, again?" Naruto screwed his eyes shut in a childish manner as he recited from his young memory.

"The Senju clan, brave of heart and of hand; the Uzumaki clan, long-live keepers of the ancient lore; the Namikaze clan, noble warriors with both strength and speed; lastly, the Hiko clan, gentle guardians of the Dragon's Heart." The last description caught Valka's attention.

"The Dragon's Heart?"

**_"It is a stone that the Hiko clan was charged with guarding by the Otsusuki brothers. Legend says that it is the rightful property of the RyÅ« GÅ•dian, the Dragon Guardian, and will one day help him defeat a great evil. It disappeared years ago when the Hiko's went into hiding."_ **A sense of foreboding suddenly grew within Valka's heart.

"Why did they hide, Lord Kurama?" A low growl resounded within their minds and a chill seeped into the room.

**"Hagoromo bore two sons, Indra and Asura. The eldest, Indra, was a prodigy whilst the younger, Asura, held little natural talent. The divide between them quickly grew as Indra excelled and Asura struggled. The elder's heart soon became cold, blinded by greed and power, choosing to live alone as he felt no one would ever truly be his equal. The youngest valued those around him, though. And while he at first appeared to be a failure, he too gained great power through endless days of hard work and effort. But unlike his brother, he remained humble and beloved by their people."**

**In the end, Hagoromo chose Asura to carry on his work, believing his youngest son to be the most worthy. This infuriated Indra, and he challenged his brother for their birthright. In the end, neither won, being of equal power and strength. Indra passed on his hatred to his descendants, the Uchiha clan. They are a lineage prone to bloodlust and madness, as well as greed. Asura's descendants, the Senju and Uzumaki, have always been at odds with them.**

_**The Uchiha coveted the Dragon's Heart, feeling that the stone was the key to obtaining greatness, and attempted to bring down their

fellow clan. The Hiko were not warriors, so they instead hid themselves, blending in with the other clans around them and secreting away the Heart. As generations passed, the knowledge became muddled as to the stone's true location. Some say the Senju have it, others claim it to be held by the Uzumaki, or even the Hyuuga. But none of these is truly correct. At the moment, only four human alive today know of its location, along with myself and the other Ancestrals. There used to be six who knew, but two recently passed away.**_

**The stone's powers are not precisely understood, as it has not yet been wielded by its true owner. But it is known to grant great wisdom, skill, and strength, as well as being a channel for the prophesied one's own powerful chakra.**

"Cha-what?" Astrid interrupted.

**"Chakra is the Himitsu word for the combination of outer physical energy and inner spiritual energy. It is used mainly as a tool and weapon by the warriors protecting the Hidden East."**

"Like magic?"

**"No, Baikingu. Your magic exists only within the realm of your gods. Chakra exists everywhere, in everyone and everything. It is essential for life and comes in many varieties."** Valka noticed a gleam in her son's eyes, and a look of sudden realization on his face.

"Wait...you mean, we have chakra too?"

**"Yes...however, those who wield chakra in the East train from a very young age to use it. The coils of chakra flowing within the body must be stretched and grown, otherwise they remain weak and unusable."**

"So...we have it but we can't actually use it?"

**_"Correct."_ **Hiccup heaved a sigh and folded both arms across his chest, grumbling a handful of words from the side of his mouth. Valka's eyes widened in surprise and Astrid clamped a hand over her mouth to stifle furious giggles.

"Hmph. Be glad that my hatchling is too innocent to comprehend such speech, Baikingu. Now, as I was saying, there are differing varieties of Chakra; nature chakra, elemental chakra, familial chakra, etc. Each living being has its own unique chakra signature, defined by their elemental affinities and their hereditary traits. Clans often have unique chakras that are passed down, called Kekkei Genkai, or bloodline limits. For some, they relate to physical abilities of the eyes or other body parts, some tend towards specific skills within elemental chakra. Due to being the heir of so many clans, Naruto has a particularly...interesting combination of bloodlines."

"Can...can we see it?" Valka questioned, hopefully.

**"That will be up to him to show. Naruto? Naruto?"** The vikings, separating themselves temporarily from the mental conversation, looked down at the boy. He still sat in the bed, a dragon on either

side of him, happily drawing with parchment and charcoal. Apparently having abandoned the discussion in favor of a more entertaining pastime.**_ "Hatchling? Naruto? Little brat...hold on a moment...NARUTO!"_** They reacted instinctively, all clapping hands to ears, Naruto included.

_ "ITAI! Sore o kizutsukeru, Kurama!"_

**"Well, then pay attention next time. They want to know about your Kekkei Genkais."**

_ "Oh, well why didn't you just say so?"_ Hiding their snickers, the vikings could almost feel the dragon rolling his eyes.

**"I did, hatchling."**

_ "Oooohâ€¦!"_ Valka's heart warmed upon seeing the embarrassed blush on the boy's tan cheeks, wondering if this is what she could have felt had she returned to Berk all those years ago. As if sensing her regret, Hiccup nudged the woman's side, catching meadow green eyes with his own forest hued orbs. A soft, reassuring smile came to his lips, bringing one to her own. They turned back to the scene at hand.

**"Naruto's mother held the chakra bloodline of the Uzumaki clan, which allows for long life and vitality, accelerated healing, and techniques capable of suppressing other chakras. She also had ties to the bloodline of the Senjus, Mokuton, a bloodline that carries a very literal connection to nature, giving the wielder control over plant life. Naruto's father bore the Jinton bloodline of the Namikaze clan, which gave him incredible speed and agility of movement; he was descended from Hiko lines as well. The Hiko Kekkei Genkai is directly tied to their responsibility for the Dragon's Heart. Those of their bloodline have unique connections to dragon's and are capable of understanding and speaking with most of them, even if it isn't in a definite language. The hatchling inherited a combination of them all, accelerated healing, vitality, an affinity with nature, speed, agility, and of course, a special bond with dragons. When his parents realized Naruto had a brand new bloodline, they allowed him to name it.**" The blond-haired child grinned up at them. His eyes shifted, the pupils shrinking into thin, vertical slits while the blue iris became deeper and more textured.

_ "I call it RyÅ« Tamashi!"_

"Dragon Soul." Hiccup whispered, almost inaudibly. Naruto turned to him in surprise, nodding slowly.

"Hai. Dragon Soul." Blond brows furrowed in thought. _ "Hey! I can understand you better now!"_

_ "And we, you."_ Valka commented. The boy's smile grew, spreading across his entire face.

_ "Then I want to talk more! Eh, eh! Look!"_ He held up the parchment he had earlier been scribbling on. It seemed to be a portrait, with nine figures

Naruto stood at the center, a wide smile on his face and bloodline active. Flanking him were a man and woman, each holding one of the

boy's hands. The woman had long hair, and wore a high collared, sleeveless dress and apron, while the man wore a short-sleeved, flowing coat over a vest and shirt. Beside the man stood two others; one with short, spiky hair, goggles, and a mischievous grin; the other with longer spiked hair, a short sword across his back, and a mask covering the lower portion of his face. The both wore a headband covering one eye. On the farthest right stood a young girl with straight hair ending at her chin and a short dress and apron, there were also slanted, rectangular marks on each of her cheeks. On the woman's side stood a lady with a low necked top, short pants, and a long-sleeved coat. Her hair laid in two tails with bangs framing her face, and a diamond shape marked her forehead. Next to her was a man with very long and wildly spiked hair, a vest-like jacket and shirt over mesh, and an enormous scroll at his side. The last figure on the left was a balding, elderly man with a short beard and flowing robes, in his hand was a thick staff.

"There's me, with Mommy and Daddy! And this uncle Obito, uncle Kakashi, and aunt Rin! Then here's Granny Tsunade, Grandpa Jiraiya, and Great-Grandpa Hiruzen! It's my family."

_"**"You forgot Iruka, Shizune, and myself."** _Naruto shook his head.

"No I didn't! I ran out of room first!" It was true, the portrait had taken up the entire page, leaving no more space for further drawings. Hiccup chuckled and strode over to the desk against the far wall.

"Then it's a good thing I always have extra parchment around here." He placed a large bundle of blank notebooks and charcoal pencils in the child's small lap, nearly dwarfing him and the small Terrible Terror. _"Use as many as you'd like."_ The boy froze, looking up at the chieftain with wonder-filled eyes.

"R-really?" Valka winced, recalling what the child's less than stellar history. She watched as her son smiled gently, and placed a soothing hand on Naruto's blond locks, stroking them delicately.

"Yes, then I'll teach you how to make more." A silent tear dripped from blue orbs like a lonely drop of rain from cloudless skies. Naruto threw his arms around Hiccup's waist, gripping tightly. The man returned the embrace, glancing at the two women from over the boy's shoulder. A promise was exchanged between the three of them simultaneously. This new part of their lives would be welcomed with open arms and hearts.

"That's a promise."

* * *

><p>Translations:

_"**"Ä' to... Dare ga kono makimono o tsukutta nodesu ka?" - "Um... who made this scroll?"**

_"**"ITAI! Sore o kizutsukeru, Kurama!" - "Ow! That hurt, Kurama!"**

****"Kynligr Skegg." - "Strange Beard."****

* * *

><p>Jeez, Kurama talks a lot in this chapter. But he's really the only one who can explain it all. Naruto may be smart in this story, but he's still just eight years old.

****p.s. let me know what you think of the chappie! :D****

11. Chapter 11: To Heal a Dragon's Heart

Disclaimer: All rights belong to Masashi Kishimoto, Viz Media, Cressida Cowel, and DreamWorks Animation; cover art belongs to Cheif117John on deviantArt Blah Blah Blah, Yada Yada Yada, La La La La...hehehe, didja read this?_

* * *

><p>AN: Gaaaaaah! Way too long since I last updated. ****Glad I am able to finally publish this chapter, the last little while has been crazy! Tending nieces for a weekend, busyness at work (baby penguins being born 8D (^v^) yay!), my 21st birthday, and of course the fact that I am currently working on a fantasy/adventure novel of my own creation. So...I've been busy.**

****Thank you to IrunaLyoko, YamashitaMasaki, grimreaper40045, Icha icha Minato Kyuubi, Guest, Xynix, Cerulean Knight, jackseaweedjackson, Drakon45, AlphaBlackWolf21, OBSERVER01, ****mellra, gamelover41592, frankieu, and butterflypuss for reviewing my story! ****

****Guest, yes I did spend "A LOT OF TIME", as you put it, into researching for the last chapter. I rewrote it so many times. My brain has been swimming with all the information I read. THANK GOODNESS FOR NARUTOPEDIA! It was a lifesaver. ****

****Xynix, I'm really glad you liked the back story. I knew it would be a hit or miss situation. I knew I needed to get the information out there, but it was a fine line between being informative and being long-winded. So glad I have Kurama as my 'Hermione', (J. K. Rowling used her in this same way, because it was believable for the character to have such extensive information. Kudo's to the bookworm characters who save our behinds!)****

****Anywhoozles, on with Chapter 11!****

* * *

><p>The remainder of the day passed rather quickly for both Vikings and child. After a warm bath and a change of bandages, Astrid and Valka dressed the blond boy in new and warmer clothing. At the moment he wore a blue kyrtil tunic over a cream colored linen undershirt, along with a pair of rough, russet brown leggings with woolen socks. Due to his small stature the Viking women had found it necessary to heavily trim, taper, and hem the already tiny garments. They hoped he would eventually grow beyond his emaciated state, but until then they would make do.<p>

Exhausted once again by the activity, Naruto lay burrowed in the fur blankets on the small bed. Kobe and Toothless reclaimed their perches by his side, huffing happily at his gentle touches. The vikings stood back, enjoying the scene of contentment. When it was apparent that the blond-haired child was moments from sleep, they vacated the chieftain's hut, leaving the dragons behind to keep an eye on their new charge. Hiccup heaved a sigh once they had passed the threshold and reached over to wrap an arm around Astrid's shoulders.

"Looks like we're in this for the long haul, huh?" The blue-eyed viking nodded.

"Yeah, but are we really ready for this? I mean, you just barely became chief, we're not even finished with the village repairs, and then there's all the duties with the Dragon Academy to think about."

"I know. I guess we'll just need to delegate things out more. Although, I'm pretty sure that we won't have any trouble with the Academy." Astrid looked up at him in confusion as they continued walking down the path to the village center.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, as soon as Naruto is able, I doubt there will be anything keeping him away from the other dragons. I mean, did you see how he interacted with them? He instinctively knows what I've had to study for years! With his help, the new dragons will easily adjust to Berk being their new nest. Although we will have to expand the stables and feeders." Valka, who had been strolling beside them in silence until that point, decided to add her opinion.

"I feel that you're right, son. But I hope you'll think about how the boy may feel towards interactin' with the villagers so soon. He's only been here two days after all." Hiccup nodded.

"Yeah, I thought about that. One of the things Lord Kurama mentioned to me yesterday was the fact that Naruto interacted far more with the dragons among his home village than the people. If we introduce him to the others right off the cuff, he'll get overwhelmed. I know the feeling all too well. The boy is used to being around dragons, not vikings, and he's probably going to fear anyone who even remotely resembles Drago. We can use the dragons to slowly get him used to Berk and it's people."

"I get it, good thinking babe." Hiccup flushed and cleared his throat, embarrassed.

"It's not really much of a plan, yet. But it will have to do for now." Valka smiled at her son's modest shyness.

"Give yourself credit where it's due, my boy. You've done amazing things, even if you don't see it. Peace is here on Berk thanks to your hard work and dedication."

"It wasn't just me, Mom. Everyone helped, and I would have never made it this far if it weren't for Toothless."

"Speaking of whom, I have a couple things for you to put into that book of yours about Night Furies." Hiccup nodded, having completely

forgotten about his research since the Dragon War. The two Haddocks begin discussing details as they neared the Mead Hall where Eret and Gobber happened to be waiting.

"Oy, Chief! How's the lad doin'?"

"Better, Gobber. How are things here?" The stout viking gestured towards the building behind him with his prosthetic hook.

"Nearly done with the Hall! Then it's on ta' the forge. I'll tell ya 'iccup, ah miss ma tools, that I do." Hiccup smiled at him.

"Well then we'd better get to it. Mom, Astrid, would you mind going down to the field where Lord Kurama is? We need to know what he plans on hunting here." Eret snorted.

"No kiddin'. A beast that size is bound ta eat us out of house an' home if we let 'im."

"Aye, hopefully he's good about eatin' fish. We got lots 'o' them around!" Astrid shrugged.

"Sure thing, babe." She leaned up and pecked him on the cheek causing a blush to erupt across his freckles, much to the amusement of those around him. Valka chuckled and brushed a stray hair from his forest-green eyes before following Astrid. Hiccup turned to Eret and Gobber who were failing to control their laughter.

"Not a word you two," he glared, ineffectively.

"Sure thing, oh great and powerful dragon master."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. If I recall correctly, Eret. It seemed to me that not too long ago you had a certain blond viking hanging off your arm. I could go get her if you'd like." The former dragon trapper paled.

"Heh heh, there's no need fer that, boss!" This time it was Hiccup's turn to snicker at his friend's predicament.

"Well, if we have reached an agreement. I say we check out the new Hall." Gobber grinned and bowed mockingly.

"Right this way, Chief!" Hiccup rolled his eyes and opened the heavy wooden door, the sounds and scents of hard working villagers reaching him. They moved through the crowd, the new chieftain inspecting, praising, and critiquing as he went. Despite the less than stellar circumstances, the young man had taken to his role well. A fact that swelled the villager's hearts with pride. They'd watched him grow from an awkward boy, to a capable youth, and now a strong adult. He'd won their hearts and minds through his hard work and dedication.

Time passed quickly as they worked, and before Hiccup knew it, the bulk of the repairs had been finished. Valka and Astrid joined them soon afterwards, explaining that Kurama intended to hunt for his own food offshore. Hiccup was relieved by the answer, knowing that it would have been difficult to provide food for such an enormous dragon in the midst of all the recovery work, although he was curious as to what the dragon would eat. A vast lunch was soon spread on the tables

of the Mead Hall, and vikings young and old sat together to enjoy their meal. Afterwards, Astrid volunteered to bring a plate of food to Naruto, along with a treat for the two dragons. Her words sparked a conversation among the other dragon riders, each curious to know the well being of the child they had helped rescue.

Hiccup explained what he could about the boy's condition, leaving out some of the details concerning his RyÅ« Tamashi, knowing that it would be a subject best left for the privacy of his own home. The vikings accepted the answer, though they seemed unsatisfied with being unable to visit him yet. In the end, it was Valka who finally convinced them that Naruto needed more time away from the public eye, explaining in depth his current fear of those resembling Drago. Once they had finished their conversation and food, Hiccup left for the forge, intent on beginning a project that had come to mind. Sitting down to his work table, he began to sketch. Soon an image came to life on the parchment, a complex swirl of lines and shadows. Turning back to the forge Hiccup put on a leather apron, picked up his hammer, and went to work.

* * *

><p>Back in the Chieftain's hut, Naruto began to slowly wake from his nap. He yawned contentedly before glancing around. Seeing the absence of the Vikings, he looked to the dragons still slumbering beside him. Recalling Kurama's earlier words, Naruto decided to once again attempt to speak with the beautiful black creature. The boy ran tiny fingers along the midnight scales of the Night Fury's ear flap, giggling when it twitched slightly. Large green orbs blinked sluggishly, pupils dilated and wide.<p>

"He-hello?" Naruto spoke timidly in his mind. The dragon perked up, but gave no reply. The child tried again, pushing further this time.

"Hello?" A strange sensation washed over him and something prodded at his conscious. It was neither words nor emotions, but something inbetween. A garbled image formed in his psyche, sensations flooding in along with it. Scrunching his eyes, Naruto tried to unscramble the thoughts. Slowly but surely, they began to focus.

"**"Hear...speak...child...dragon...Ancestor...sleep...hurt...save...h...he...ell...hello?"**"

"Um, hi."

"**"H...hiâ€¦|""** A grin spread across both of their faces, mirroring the happiness they felt.

"**"I...Too...Tooth...less...Toothless."**"

"I'm Naruto!" the boy giggled. _"I'm glad you can talk now!"_

"**"Y-yes...talk...talk!"**" The black dragon began avidly bouncing around the room in his excitement, rattling the entire hut. Laughter bubbled up within Naruto's chest, exploding out loudly until a sharp sting of pain raced through his ribs. The laugh died and trailed into a aching cough, distracting the Night Fury from his merriment. Toothless nuzzled the boy in gentle worry, fluffing blond locks with

his warm breath. Once the pain and coughing subsided, Naruto gave his friend a reassuring smile.

"I'm alright, Toothless. Thanks."

"**"Dragon boy. Friend. Help? Pain?"**"

"Yeah, but I think it's getting better. Just sore still."

"**"Toothless. Rider. Hiccup. Find?"**"

"No, thanks. I'll be fine until he comes back." Toothless seemed to nod in understanding, before he perked up once more.

"**"Hatchling. Hungry? Toothless. Fish. Hunt."**"

"Uhhhm, no thanks. Sh-Should we wake up Kobe?" The Night Fury wrinkled his scaly nose and huffed.

"**"No. Little Arrowtail. Boring. Sleep. Stay. Hatchling play?"**"

"Play what? Oh, like a game?"

"**"Yes! Yes!" **The child's blond eyebrows furrowed.

"What should we play?" Toothless cocked his head to one side with each new idea they tossed around.

"**"Sky. Fly. Ride?"**"

"I can't walk, my legs are still bandaged, remember?"

"**"Hunt? Fish. Yummy."**"

"Still can't."

"**"Run. Tag?"**"

"Nope."

"**"Wrestle?"**"

"Nuh uh."

"**"Sleep?"**"

"No way!"

"**"Hatchling boring."**"

"Toothless!" In response, the dragon poked out a sliver of long pink tongue. Naruto retaliated with the same gesture.

"Nyeeh!"

"**"N-neh!"**"

"Nyeeh!"

_"**"Nyeeh!"** _They soon began a comic battle of silly faces and nonsensical sounds, contorting their features into wild expressions. Soon, it was impossible for them to hold in the laughter, and once again both child and dragon dissolved into mirth, Naruto laughing slightly more cautiously this time. Once he had regained his breath, the blond-haired boy turned to his smiling companion.

"Toothless?"

"**"Yes?"**

"Thank you."

"**"W-welcome. Hatchling friend. Help friend."**

"Yeah...friends." Silence reigned for a moment, as dragon and child stared into each other's eyes. Crystal blue locked with glowing green. The Night Fury's ear flaps raised suddenly and his head tilted to one side as an idea came to him.

_"**"Hatchling. Tell friend. Stories."** _Naruto smiled brilliantly.

"Okay! You first." A flurry of images, sensations, sounds, and emotions rushed into the child's mind. A mingling of memories and thoughts. His eyes glazed over as he watched the past years of the dragon's life in a matter of moments. It was easier this way, than to listen to the dragon struggling with words. All too soon, the inundation faded and the child shook himself back into reality. Small hands clasped his head, entwined into blond locks.

"Woahâ€¦" he murmured.

"**"Hatchling hurt?"**

"Nah, I'm ok. That was just a lot all at once."

_"**"S-sorry."** _The black dragon's lips lifted into the imitation of a bashful smile. Naruto giggled.

"Thanks, Toothless. Now, it's my turn!" Concentrating deeply, Naruto began sending mental images of his life into the dragon's consciousness. He showed as many happy memories as he could, deciding to skip through the hardships along the way. He relived the moments as they flowed through the link. He recalled training with his godparents and uncles in his unique abilities, spending time laughing and playing with his parents, meeting and learning about the many dragons living nearby, and of course, the moments alone with Kurama that he held so dear. By the time he finished, the child was panting heavily from the exertion. He hissed at the pain in his ribs from each gulped breath, but grinned in satisfaction at his newest friend.

"**"Hatchling special. Family love. Protect. Strong. Good. Stay? New family? Berk nice. Nest here?"**

_"No, Mommy and Daddy must really miss me. As soon as Kurama says it's ok, we'll need to go back. After all, I've got to get as strong

as Daddy so I can protect my precious people!" _Toothless made a strange rumbling sound, resembling curiosity.

"**"Precious people?"**

"Yup! Mommy and Daddy, and all my uncles, my auntie, grandpa, my godparents, and of course my dragon friends!"

"**"Human friends? Hiccup friend riders. Fly together. Fight together. Hatchling same? Who?"**

"Well, you see," Naruto chewed his lip in thought. _"I didn't really know anyone else in Konoha. The other kids always treated me funny 'cause my Daddy is Hokage."_ It was obvious by the dragon's expression that he didn't understand the boy's words. So he resorted to once again sending a handful of small memories. Toothless nodded a moment later.

"**"Dragon boy. Hatchling of Alpha. Other hatchlings different."**

"Yeah!" Naruto trailed off. Toothless, sensing his discomfort, playfully licked his cheek. The child giggled and made a face of mock disgust.

"Eew! Toothless! What was that for?"

_"**"Friend sad. Toothless make happy. No more sad." **The boy wrapped his bruised and cut arms around the warm neck of the reptile beside him, hiding his face within the thick hide. They sat like that for several moments, before Toothless spoke again.

"**"Hatchling special. Companion of Ancestor. Dragon child. Alpha will protect. Promise. Keep safe. Understand?"** Naruto leaned back to look deeply into the wide green eyes. _**"No more bad men. No more Drago. Gone. Safe. Hiccup good. Astrid good. Valka good. Berk Vikings good. Stay here safe. Heal. Then hatchling go home."**_

"Promise?" The dragon nudged Naruto's head, the way any dragon would a hatchling, securing their bond.

"**"Promise."**

* * *

><p>Translations:<p>

Kyrtill - A traditional male overtunic for the upper body, commonly with a high, keyhole neckline. Think of young Hiccup's green tunic piece.

* * *

><p>AN: Yeah, it's kind of rough and short. But I really wanted to get this out because it's been so long, and as a birthday present to myslef. Lol. :D Let me know what you think.**

Disclaimer: I don't own Naruto, How To Train Your Dragon, or the cover art. Capisce?

* * *

><p>AN: This chapter took a long time to write. Again.**

Huge, major, big-time, massive, all-encompassing thank you to gamelover41592, frankieu, butterflypuss, OBSERVER01, starvires, Banjo the fox, DeathCrawler, Cerulean Knight, yindragonkiba, .50, Icha icha Minato Kyuubi, noirekitsune, Zanzar, and Dragonwolffox for reviewing the last chapter! Also, thank you to everyone who has followed, favorited, and read my story!

On another note, I found a song that perfectly exemplifies this story! It's 'Flight of the Silverbird' from the album 'Battlecry' by 'Two Steps From Hell'! It is such a perfect fit for this story! Please, please, please listen to it! :D

I probably butcher Japanese in each chapter...but soon enough we'll be past all that, so thanks for your patience. If you see any obvious glaring mistakes, blame Google Translate.

Anywhoozles, on with the story!

* * *

><p>The day wore on gradually for the residents of Berk. Hiccup, Astrid and the other dragon riders worked with the villagers in their efforts to rebuild while Valka, Gobber, and Eret worked with the dragons. Naruto continued to rest within the chief's hut, watched over by both Toothless and Kobe. All too soon, dusk had fallen and Vikings began trundling back to their ramshackle homes. Exhausted, Hiccup and Astrid supported each other as they made their way up the hillside to the chieftain's home. Valka was already there, waiting for them as she began preparing the evening meal. Astrid joined her wordlessly, leaving Hiccup to go check on their guest upstairs. Wincing with each screeching creak of the old steps, the young chief limped to his old bedroom.<p>

Toothless crooned happily in greeting upon seeing him and Hiccup's heart soared to see the grateful look gracing Naruto's face in the form of a smile. Unable to wait any longer the Night Fury tackled his rider, sending them both to the floor accompanied by a chorus of giggles from the child.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm happy to see you, bud." He locked eyes with the boy and grinned, "You too, Naruto." The blond-haired child's face beamed upon understanding the words.

"_Arigato!_ Erm...th-thank you?" Hiccup nodded.

"Your welcome. How are you feeling, Naruto."

"I, um, _yoi kanji_, feeling b-better."

"That's great, bud. You're really getting the hang of our language too."

"Hai! Hai!" the boy chattered excitedly. "Eh, words h-hard to say. _Karera wa kimyÅ• ni kikoemasu_. Words...strange." Hiccup laughed at that.

"_Hai_, they probably are. Now, are you ready for dinner?"

"_Eto?_"

"Dinner, uh...food?"

"_Hai!_ Er, yeah!"

"Alright, I'll be back. Come on, Toothless. Your food's downstairs, bud." The jet black dragon eagerly leapt out the bedroom door, rattling the house as he bounded down the stairs. As Hiccup moved to stand, a small hand gripped his sleeve, stopping him. Forest-green eyes met crystal blue, the child gnawing his lower lip.

"Er, _Hicca-san_, go...down...too?" A dark eyebrow rose in surprise.

"You want to come downstairs?"

"_Hai._" Hiccup ran a hand through his messy hair and blew a heavy breath.

"I don't know, Naruto. You're still in pretty bad shape." His lips turned in a petulant pout and the boy thrust a bandaged arm forward.

"Not hurt so bad! _Mite! Mite!_ Look!" Sighing, the chieftain began unwrapping the bandage from the child's slender appendage, leveling his gaze with Naruto all the while.

"See, Naruto you still-what?!" Hiccup gaped, words leaving him. He ran a finger over skin which had, just that morning, been covered in cuts, bruises, and welts. The tanned surface now bore only hints of wear, bits of discoloration and small scrapes, but nothing like he had seen only hours before. "Naruto," Hiccup spoke in a breathy, near silent whisper. "Whatâ€|"

"_RyÅ« Tamashi._ Dragon Soul. Heal quick. It, uh, _okurimono...gift. See?" Proving his point, Naruto flexed his arm. "Kurama say part of being _RyÅ« GÄ•dian_, em, Dragon Guardian. Powerful chakra. It ok, _Hicca-san_?"

"Hm?" Mesmerized, Hiccup was only partially listening, still trying to unpuzzle the riddle before him. He gazed at Naruto's marked face, recognizing the look of trepidation and fear of rejection. He snapped back to reality. "Oh, Naruto." The man patted the small arm comfortingly. "No one will hurt you here. I was just surprised, that's all." The blue-eyed boy let out a relieved breath.

"Not mad?"

"No, Naruto."

"Th-that man...not like. S-say want marks stay." Hiccup fisted the fabric of his leggings in anger and struggled to keep the gentle

smile on his face.

"Did he?" Naruto nodded, then changed the subject, for which Hiccup was grateful.

"Er, _Hicca-san_? Get food now?"

"Oh, right, let's go." Gingerly pulling aside the fur blankets, the Viking scooped Naruto into his arms and strode downstairs.

* * *

><p>Dinner was an interesting affair, After Valka and Astrid berated Hiccup for his carelessness, the four sat down to a hearty meal accompanied by their dragons. Stories and jokes were exchanged, despite the lingering language barrier, and the Vikings delighted in making their young charge laugh. Naruto stuffed himself with meats, fish, bread, and cheese, obviously excited over the variety of new and foreign foods. The three adults watched in slight awe as portion after portion disappeared, something they had only witnessed from the heartiest of Viking men. In the end, they assumed it a part of their guest's mysterious life.<p>

All too soon, the child's sky-blue eyes began to droop and he gave a jaw-cracking yawn, exposing unusually sharp canine teeth. Hiccup and Astrid shared an amused glance, and Valka chuckled.

"I'm surprised he lasted this long," Hiccup whispered, carrying the dozing child upstairs once more.

"Yeah, but it's no wonder with all that food he ate." Astrid replied, tucking a lock of golden hair behind the boy's ear as she tucked him into the bed. Valka watched the two from the doorway, heart warmed at the sight of her son and his beloved acting out the parental role. She was of no doubt that they would one day become a wonderful mother and father. Kobe quickly rejoined Naruto on the little bed, curling nose to tail on the blanket. As Astrid moved to leave, she felt a tug on her arm wrap and looked down to see Naruto gazing up at her with pleading eyes, clearly half asleep already.

"Onegai...komori-uta...kaa-san." Astrid turned to Hiccup in confusion, and he tapped his chin in thought.

"Hm, _'onegai'_ is 'please', and I think _'kaa-san'_ means...mother." The female Viking's blue eyes widened in surprise.

"And the rest"

"_Komori-uta_...I'm not quite sure-" A small whimper from the child interrupted him, as the boy repeated his words.

"Kaa-san...komori-uta o utaimasuâ€|" Brown eye-brows rose as Hiccup finally understood the message. A smile spread across his lips as he placed a hand on Astrid's shoulder.

"He's asking you to sing a lullaby." Astrid's jaw dropped.

"B-but I-wha-no-I don't-huh? But I, I don't know any lullabies!"

Hiccup!" She whispered frantically. The chieftain held back a laugh at the usually unflappable Viking's shock.

"Yes you do. Remember the last time Stormfly had hatchlings?" Her eyes widened and a flush of deep red spread suddenly across her cheeks.

"Wait, you saw that?" Hiccup chuckled.

"Yup. Now, sing." The blond woman grumbled for a moment until Naruto tugged again on her sleeve.

"Fine," she cleared her throat and began.

"Sleep you now, oh child of mine,

Sleep you in your manger.

Sleep while winter winds will whine,

Sleep you safe from danger."

"Sleep you when the dark ice groans,

Frost and fire nearing.

Sleep you when the silence moans,

Sleep you with no fearing."

"Sleep you well and sleep you long,

For life will leave you weary.

Sleep you still and sleep you strong,

'Til you no longer hear me."

"You no longer hear me."

Astrid opened her eyes to see that Naruto had fallen fast asleep, a look of calm serenity on his face.

"Told you," Hiccup whispered, receiving a smack to the arm in return. "Ow! What was that for?"

"Hmph, for ruining the moment."

"Now, now, children. Let's go back downstairs 'afore your arguin' wakes up the lad." The three Vikings departed, along with Toothless, leaving Kobe behind with Naruto, both lost in the land of dreams.

* * *

><p>Kurama was usually a patient creature. He had lived for centuries, watching countless years pass by. But at the moment his patience had worn thin and the Ancestral began to tap his claws irritably on the stone floor of Naruto's mindscape. Finally, the pitter-patter of small feet heralded the end of his wait.<p>

"It's about time, hatchling." Naruto skidded to a halt at the feet of the flame-colored dragon. He placed a tiny fist on each hip petulantly.

"Whadaya mean? I came here as soon as I fell asleep, ya'know!"

"Hmph. But you're the one who insisted on a lullaby first." The child flushed red in embarrassment.

"W-well, yeah, b-but that's just 'cause Mommy always used to sing to me before bed!" The dragon grunted again.

"You also called the blond Viking 'Mother'." The boy froze.

"I did?..."

"Yup."

"Ohâ€|" Tiny shoulders drooped.

"She didn't really seem to mind though."

"Really?!" The hopeful grin had returned to his face, and Kurama couldn't help but chuckle.

"Yes. Now, hatchling, this is important so listen carefully." Kurama chuckled, a cunning smirk growing across his snout, and Naruto gulped in apprehension. **"It's time for you to meet the Council of Nine."**

"...WHAT?" Before Naruto could protest further, the two disappeared in a swirl of color. Naruto fell face first to the ground, the sudden return of gravity knocking him off balance. The boy sat up, rubbing his reddening nose.

"Owie! Kurama? What was that for?"

"Hn, look up, hatchling." The child raised his head, jaw dropping a moment later. Before him stood eight massive figures; dragons of varying size, shape, and hue. They gazed back at him from their semi-circle formation, arranged in order according to their number of tails.

"K-kurama," Naruto stuttered out. The Nine-Tails didn't reply, instead pushing the boy gently ahead with a front foot. The feline Two-Tails stepped forward, and the child stared in fascination at it's undulating flame patterned scales.

"Naruto Uzukaze, welcome to the Council of Nine. We are the Ancestral Dragons. I am Matatabi, the Two-Tailed Neko Dragon. To my right is Shukaku, the One-Tailed Tanuki Dragon. On my left is Isobu, the Three-Tailed Ishigame Dragon; Son Goku, the Four-Tailed Saru Dragon; KokuÅ•, the Five-Tailed Uma Dragon; Saiken, the Six-Tailed Iriko Dragon, ChÅ•mei, the Seven-Tailed Kabutomushi Dragon, and lastly is GyÅ«ki, the Eight-Tailed Ushitako." Still stunned, Naruto managed a shaky bow.

"Um, h-helloâ€|" The Nine-Tails finally spoke up.

Hatchling, these dragons are my siblings and fellow Ancestrals. When we last met, we came to the decision that it was time to further explain your role as the Dragon Guardian.

"B-but why now?" Kurama grunted deeply.

***"We planned to do this when you reached a better age, but with all that has happened we can't afford to wait any longer. You are now in a safe place, hidden from all who wish to harm you. There is no better time to begin your training."** Naruto perked up slightly at the final word.

"My training?"

***"Yes, hatchling. But there is something that must be done first."** When Kurama finished, Matatabi spoke once again.

***"Naruto, step forward. We have a gift for you."** The boy did as he was told as each dragon placed their forelimbs in a pile, one on top of the other, until all nine rested in a stack. Naruto reached towards them, fist clenched, and rested his hand against the scales of the others. He stared into the eyes of the dragons surrounding him...and then smiled.

* * *

><p>Translations:

"yoi kanji" - "feeling better"

"Karera wa kimyÅ• ni kikoemasu." - "They sound strange."

"Mite! Mite!" - "Look! Look!"

"okurimono" - "gift"

"Onegai." - "Please."

"Komori-uta." - "Lullaby."

"Kaa-san." - "Mother."

"Komori-uta o utaimasu." - "Sing a lullaby."

"Neko." - "Cat."

"Tanuki." - "Raccoon Dog."

"Ishigame." - "Turtle."

"Saru." - "Monkey."

"Uma." - "Horse."

"Iriko." - "Slug."

"Kabutomushi." - "Rhinoceros Beetle."

"Ushitako." - "Octopus Bull."

* * *

><p>AN: SHORT! Yeah, this chapter was teeny. But I chose to publish something short rather than make you wait longer. BTW, the song is called 'Icelandic Lullaby' by Sissel. She's an amazing singer, so I recommend looking up the video.**

13. Chapter 13: A New Friend

Disclaimer: I don't own Naruto or HTTYD, ok? Same goes for the coverart.

* * *

><p>AN: Yes, I do know that it takes me a long time to get each chapter out. But in my defense, I'm busy. Family, church, work, education, and my other writings tend to take priority. **

I am also super embarrassed about a couple mistakes I just realized. First off, apparently, I've accidentally mixed up the name for Naruto's Terrible Terror friend at times. His name is Kone, meaning connection, but there are times when I wrote it as Kobe, which means heaven knows what. Secondly, for some reason I've switched back and forth between capitalizing Viking without realizing. So, if you happen to spot one of said mistakes, please let me know. Thanks!

* * *

><p>Naruto awoke exhausted, having been active within his mindscape the entire night. The nine ancestrals had begun his training immediately in a way that he hadn't expected or enjoyed. Meditation. By far his least favorite exercise, after all, it's completely unfair to ask a boy of only eight to sit still for such long periods of time. But the dragons had insisted and, not wishing to disappoint his new teachers, Naruto complied.<p>

Despite his reluctance, Naruto had made good progress and managed to accomplish the first objective given to him by the Ancestrals. Deep within his meditative state, he had searched for and found the chakra he had received from the ancient creatures. Naruto knew without a doubt that he would enjoy unlocking the mysteries each power source held.

Once he had succeeded, Naruto spent time getting to know his eight new friends. The dragons were unique, to say the least, with individual personalities and attitudes. Matatabi acted as the 'mother' of the group and kept an eye on her siblings, especially Shukaku and Son Goku who loved to bicker. Kokuo and Isobu were laid back and rather nonchalant, while Chomei and Saiken exhibited almost child-like personalities. Gyuki was the most fatherly of them all, acting as the peacekeeper among the dragons. Lastly, Kurama, seemed to be a strange mix of them all, stern one moment and sly the next.

Naruto shook his head, returning to reality. He threw back the covers to check his injuries. Kurama had explained that the influx of chakra would likely create changes in his body both presently and in the

future. Peering beneath each bandage the blond child could see what the eldest Ancestral had meant. Without hesitation Naruto tore the wrapping away, exposing his still skinny body. There was an obvious improvement. Surface wounds had disappeared, leaving behind only the barest traces of injuries, and a quick flex of limbs and torso proved the state of his formerly broken and fractured bones. They were still tender, but not horribly painful.

Wincing slightly the child placed bare feet on the chilled wooden floor, bracing himself against the bed as he regained his balance. Mentally thanking the Ancestrals, Naruto tottered towards the door. Upon reaching the stairs the boy giggled and sat, sliding down the steps on his rear end with a series of small thumps. Halfway down he heard a small trill and looked back to see Kone staring at him curiously through half-lidded eyes. Naruto smiled brilliantly at his little friend and motioned for the dragon to join him. Side by side the two descended, one sliding while the other hopped.

Silence greeted them on the ground floor, marked only by a dying fire crackling in the hearth. Not seeing anyone else about, Naruto set off to look for some food, finding a small plate being kept warm on the stones of the fireplace. Within moments the plate was cleaned of food and the child sat back, his stomach now content. A noise from outside caught his attention and Naruto eagerly ran to the door, pulling it open with all his might.

Late morning sunlight streamed through the opening and Naruto shielded his eyes against the brightness. An excited gasp escaped him as an utterly foreign world was revealed. Dozens of dragons flew here and there, species he had never before seen even in his wildest dreams. Some bore riders to different locations while others hefted pallets of supplies with claws, wings, and teeth. Naruto shivered suddenly, a cool breeze penetrating his clothing and reaching the skinny frame beneath. Undaunted, he moved forwards, set on reaching the wondrous creatures.

He hadn't made it far, however, before he was spotted. A shout rang out from a rider above him, alerting the other villagers. Seeing the large group of burly vikings headed his way, Naruto's courage failed him. Scrambling, he backed away, ducking behind Kone in a futile effort to hide until he could make it back through the door. Apparently sensing his fear the tiny dragon hissed and growled at the people approaching, to no avail. Overly eager, the crowd continued to near the boy, causing his anxiety to rise. Terrible memories flashed to the surface of his mind and tears began gathering at the corners of his eyes that now bore thin, slitted pupils. Naruto threw his head back and a draconic scream rang from deep within his throat. The crowd froze at the sound and dragons of all shapes and sizes stopped in their tracks. Before the vikings could blink three of the reptiles had leapt between them and the boy, wings spread to bar the human's path. Muttering broke out among the villagers at the sudden occurrence and they could only watch as other dragons continued to gather around the chieftain's hut.

Naruto huddled safely behind the creatures, taking comfort in their large, warm forms. He peaked out from behind a blue and yellow spined tail and spotted a single viking moving his way through the crowd. The blond-haired man finally emerged from the group and waved a hooked metal limb in the air as he shouted. Naruto strained his ears to understand what was being said, but could only make out a handful

of the heavily accented words.

"Oy! What are you all _gapende pÃ¥? What _er problemet?" A random villager pointed at the dragons crouched on the path leading to Hiccup's home, and the one-handed man raised a blond eyebrow. "Tha's it? You're all _stÃ¥r her_ like a _gjeng med sauer fordi_ some dragons are _konstituert morsomt?" He hobbled towards the nearest reptile muttering beneath his breath the whole way.

"Now, what are you _beist_ a _urolighet_ 'bout?" The dragons hissed as he drew closer and, behind them, Naruto moved further towards the door. The viking held up a hand and began to speak in a soft tone. "Now, now, there's no _trenge_ ta' be _redd_. It's alright, I'm not skal hurt ya." The dragons hesitated at first but then slowly began to relax.

"So, wha's _fikk_ you all _oppstyr_ upâ€|" the man murmured. At last, Naruto managed to reach the heavy door behind him and ran in, slamming it shut with. Outside, he heard the blond man shout.

"_Ok alle_. Back ta' your _boliger_ an' _husarbeid_ now. Av ya go!" The outside world soon quieted after a rush of scaly clicks and the thumps of booted feet. Naruto stood warily inside the hut, listening to the lack of noise until he was startled by three knocks on the door.

"_Gutt_? Are ye in there?" As he listened, more of the foreign words began to make sense, and Naruto realized that the man sounded neither angry nor upset. He recalled the familiarity Hiccup had shown the one-handed man when he had first woken in the healer's hut. Deciding to take a chance, Naruto slid the thick wooden barrier back slightly and peered out. Twinkling, yet concerned blue eyes gazed back into his, and the boy let out a surprised squeak, abandoning his looking spot in favor of scurrying further into the dim room. Slowly, the blond-haired man pushed the door open and stepped inside.

Naruto's eyes widened as the man came forward before stopping abruptly as a growl resonated through the room. Kone leapt from the rafters above and landed at the viking's feet, hissing territorially. A moment later he stopped, however, and slit pupils widened as the dragon began to sniff the large man. Several deep breaths later the tiny creature snorted and trundled off to sit next to the shaking boy, who watched all this in confusion.

"Kone?" he whispered. The dragon merely lay down on his side, curling into the boy's leg before drifting off to sleep. The child gnawed his lip, before turning his attention back to the man, who still hadn't moved from his spot. "Who...who...you?"

"Er, uh, Gobber." The blond man replied. "An' you?"

"Naruto." The two stared at each other in awkward silence, the boy gnawing his bottom lip and the man shifting on his peg leg.

"So, er, ahem," Gobber sighed heavily. "I'm not so good at this. Uh, "I _vil ikke skade_ you, _ok? ForstÃ¥?" The words tickled Naruto's memory, and he recalled hearing similar sounds from Astrid when they first met. Deciding to trust both his own instincts and those of his dragon friend, Naruto slowly eased himself away from the corner. He pointed to the two chairs nearest the fire.

"_Sitte_" Naruto was unsure of his successful attempt at using the viking's language until Gobber's eyes lit up in understanding and he cautiously walked to the chair. Naruto watched him carefully as he sat down, still feeling wary. He wanted to trust the man, but he'd learned a hard lesson in the year past that you shouldn't believe first appearances. The boy made his way to the other empty chair and settled down. A second, more awkward pause ensued, neither male knowing what to say or do. Finally, apparently tired of the tension, Kone leapt onto Naruto's lap, crooning and rumbling at him. An idea came into the boy's mind. He looked at the viking sitting nearby and pointed at the small dragon.

"Dragon," after a momentary pause he continued. "_Drage_" A wild blond brow rose at the word.

"_Drage_" he repeated. Naruto nodded.

"_Drage_. Dragon."

"D-dr-dragon." The boy beamed when the man spoke the word, but became confused when he continued. "_Forferdelig Skrekk_" Naruto blinked at him.

"What? I don't understand, um, _nei forstÃ¥_." Gobber stroked his beard and nodded. Naruto decided to try something else. He pointed once again to the dragon on his lap.

"Dragon. _Drage_. Kone." He then gestured to himself, to the dragon, and lastly to Gobber. "Naruto...Kone...Gobber. _ForstÃ¥_" Gobber slowly mimicked his motions and words.

"Na-ru-to...Ko-nay?" The blond child nodded as did the man. "_ForstÃ¥_" Naruto decided to continue their little game. He began pointing at various objects in the room, stating their name and, if he knew it, the viking translation. Gobber grinned as he played along, obviously enjoying himself as he tried to wrap his mouth around the various foreign words. They persisted in their diversion, trying to stump each other with harder words, phrases, and sounds, though the original reason for the activity was not lost on them. Naruto decided that the man across from him had finally learned enough to understand what he now wished to do.

"May we go outside, Gobber? I want to go find Hiccup." Gobber pointed behind himself towards the door and raised an eyebrow, asking if he was correct. Naruto nodded, scooping up Kone who scuttled to stretch out across the back of his shoulders. The two blond males walked to the door and paused. Looking to the viking, Naruto hesitantly reached out, grasping the calloused hand with his own small fingers. Gobber blinked in surprise before smiling with a rock-toothed grin. Together, they walked out the door and down the path.

* * *

><p>Hiccup stepped back from the blazing make-shift forge and ran a sleeve across his sweat soaked brow. He looked down at the metals he'd been smithing for the last few hours. Bolts, hinges, nails, bars, and other odds and ends, all needed for the rebuilding of his village. He intended to make his people's home as sturdy as possible, using stone and metal in addition to wood and thatch. Not too much

metal though, Hiccup didn't want a repeat of that lightning storm five years ago. Just enough of the material to give the buildings extra strength against the harsh island conditions.<p>

He'd also set aside pieces for their ships. The longships had been obliterated by the attack from Drago's Bewilderbeast, and they'd relied on fishing from the dock or by dragonback for days already. As chieftain, Hiccup felt it his duty to get the villagers back onto their feet, and he had thanked the god's many times for the stubbornness and resilience of vikings. His people had banded together like in years past, helping to rebuild each other's homes and lives, and Hiccup couldn't be more proud.

"Oy, 'iccup!" The shout broke him from his thoughts he turned to the man he looked to as an uncle, wiping sooty hands on his leather apron.

"Yes, Gobber?" The one-handed man gestured to behind his good leg, and Hiccup caught a brief glimpse of bright yellow.

"Found this little 'un drawin' a crowd outsider yer hut. He wanted to come an' see ya." Hiccup tilted his head to look behind Gobber and couldn't help the surprise that spread across his face at the sight of the shy child.

"Naruto? How are you out of bed?" The boy seemed nervous and it took Hiccup a moment to understand why. He held out a hand, palm open to the little blond. "I'm not mad, Naruto. I'm just surprised you're up and walking so soon. Hm..._sore wa...kamaimasen. Watashi shiawasena...kimi ga yoriyoidesu_." The boy brightened immediately, and walked out from behind the large viking. The reality of the situation hit Hiccup at that moment, and he turned to Gobber questioningly, still watching the boy from the corner of his eye as he gazed about the temporary forge. "Hey Gobber, wasn't he afraid of you last time?" The man shrugged.

"Aye. ah guess I earned his trust back in the hut. 'Twas rather strange. He seemed ta relax once that Terror 'o' his smelled me a bit." Hiccup nodded and glanced at the dragon draped around Naruto's neck, sound asleep yet still alert judging from his posture.

"He name him Kone. They're rather attached to each other. If Kone told Naruto you're safe, then he would believe him." The blond man quirked a brow at his chief.

"Ahem, Hiccup. Not ta' seem rude. But 'ow would that dragon tell 'im anything. It's not as though the beasties can talk." Hiccup chuckled and gave a wry grin to the blacksmith.

"To Naruto they can. He's unlike anyone we've ever met before, Gobber. And I have a feeling he's going to change our lives." Forest-green eyes softened as he watched the tiny child gazing at all his smithing tools, chattering in his native tongue to his dragon friend the whole while. It struck him as odd how the boy could go from all innocence and smiles, to fear and defensiveness in a single heartbeat. But he attributed it to his trauma at the hands of Drago and those other madmen he'd witnessed through Kurama's memory transfer. Hiccup could recall his own moments of fear after twice being held captive by Alvin all those years ago.

"I think ye've been in the heat too long, laddie. But I'll take yer word for it. After all, ye are the dragon expert." Hiccup shrugged.

"I'm not so sure about that anymore. Yeah, I've studied dragon behavior and befriended the unholy offspring of life and death itself. But my mother lived alongside them for twenty years and we're standing by a eight year old who can speak to them. I think I'm outclassed on this one."

"Don't count yerself out so soon, 'iccup. After all, only one person can claim to have changed the mind of Stoick the Vast when it came to dragons, and that's you. Knowin' the man yer father was, I think ahm more impressed by that than anythin' else." Hiccup smiled and his eyes grew glassy.

"Yeah...say, Gobber? Do...do you think he would have been proud of me? If he'd seen me now as chief, I mean." Gobber clasped his one good hand on Hiccup's shoulder in an iron grip.

"Laddie, I have no doubt that your father would 'ave been fit ta burstin' with pride for his son, an' the man he'd become." The chieftain reached up and placed his hand on Gobber's shoulder, completing the warrior's embrace.

"Thank you," he whispered. The two stood there, lost in memory until a loud clang broke the quiet. They whirled around to see Naruto making frantic shushing gestures at the Terrible Terror, who now sat on the warm anvil, having obviously knocked Hiccup's work to the ground in order to make room for himself. Naruto looked to the two vikings, worry bright in his eyes and a guilty look on his face. Hiccup couldn't help himself and he laughed. Long and hard and loud. Gobber joined him a moment later. Naruto stood next to his dragon friend, looking at the men in confusion. The Terrible Terror abruptly gave a small croon and growl to the child whose expression brightened. Naruto looked out into the village and shrieked gutturally. Seconds later, a black mass of scales bounded up, smothering the boy in gooey, slobbery kisses. The two men laughed harder, if it was possible, at the sight and this time they were joined by the gleeful giggles of a child. Other villagers looked on, pausing in their chores and wondering what could be the reason for so much happiness.

After their mirth had died down and Toothless finally ceased licking the boy, Naruto walked over to the fallen metal. Wiping the dragon saliva from his hands he picked it up carefully, turning it over and over and running small fingers along each edge. He held the piece up for Hiccup to take.

"What this, Hiccup_-san_?" While Gobber seemed puzzled by the one foreign word, Hiccup understood.

"It's called a nail. _Sore wa yoba rete imasu_ nail."

"Na...nail?" Hiccup nodded.

"_Hai_. Yes." Naruto smiled brilliantly.

"Yes! Nail! _ArigatÅ•_ Hiccup_-san_!" Naruto began pointing at other things around the forge, pausing to ask Hiccup the name of each and

every one. Gobber watched in amusement for several minutes before interrupting.

"Oy, 'iccup. Hate ta break up this little game, but 'ow in Thor's name are ye able to know an' say all those funny words? I could barely understand 'im meself! How'd ye do it?" Hiccup's smile grew mischievous.

"Oh, I had a little help from Kurama."

"Tha' great big dragon the tyke brought with 'im? 'Ow would he help ye?"

"He has a lot to say, once you learn to listen." Gobber raised his hand and hook in the air in mock defeat.

"I'll ne'r understand ye, laddie. But I trust ye know what yer doin'." Naruto, who had been watching their little exchange while petting the Night Fury and Terrible Terror, moved over and tugged on Hiccup's leather apron.

"Hiccup_-san_?"

"Yes, Naruto?" The child pursed his lips in thought then pointed to Gobber.

"Arm and leg gone." The chieftain quickly glanced at his pseudo-uncle, but his worry was soon abated. The man knelt on one knee, showing off his peg leg to the child and holding up his prosthetic hand.

"Yeah, laddie. They are."

"_Oji _Kakashi and _oji_ Obito like you. One eye."

"Eh?" Gobber questioned in confusion.

"Kakashi and Obito are people he knew back in the East." Hiccup explained. "Both were uncles to Naruto, as far as I can tell. He showed me a drawing of them and they each covered one eye, Kakashi the right and Obito the left. He's connected it to your missing limbs." Gobber nodded, understanding, and unscrewed the hook on his left arm, showing it to the boy. Naruto looked at it, fascinated. He turned to Hiccup and pointed at his leg then to Gobber's.

"His old, your's nice. You fix?" The blond viking laughed.

"I fixed 'em myself! An' I'd rather keep 'em simple, no offense Hiccup."

"None taken." Naruto furrowed his blond brows.

"You made so you proud?"

"Aye! That I am, laddie!" Naruto opened his mouth to speak but paused, eyes becoming glassy and blank as his pupils suddenly thinned into slits "Oy!" Gobber jerked in surprise. "What is that?"

"That would be him talking to Kurama."

"What?" Hiccup shrugged.

"I told you. Just keep watching, you'll see." Naruto remained with his far off gaze for a moment longer before blinking. His eyes returned to their bright hue and his pupils once again rounded out.

"Eh, Hiccup-san? Kurama is hungry. We find food for him?" Hiccup nodded, beginning to untie his leather apron.

"Alright. I'll see you later, Gobber. Looks like we have a dragon to feed." Gobber watched as Hiccup strolled away, hand clasped in the grip of the child with two dragons trundling behind. The old viking shook his head and heaved a sigh.

"Ah, Stoick. If'n ye could see him now, ye'd be proud."

* * *

><p>Translations:

****gapende pÃ¥ - gaping at****

****er problemet - is the problem****

****stÃ¥r her - standing here****

****gjeng med sauer fordi - bunch of sheep because****

****konstituert morsomt - acting funny****

****beist - beasties****

****urolighet - fussin****

****trenge - need****

****redd - scared****

****skal - gonna****

****fikk - got****

****oppstyr - fussed****

****ok alle - alright everyone****

****boliger - homes****

****husarbeid - chores****

****av - off****

****gutt - boy****

****vil ikke skade - won't hurt****

****ok - alright****

****forstÃ¥ - understand****

****sitte - sit****

****drage - dragon****

****Forferdelig Skrekk - Terrible Terror****

****nei forstÃ¥ - no understand****

****sore wa kamaimasen - it's alright****

****watashi shiawasena kimi ga yoriyoidesu - I happy you better****

****san - (honorific) Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms.****

****sore wa yoba rete imasu - it's called a****

****hai - yes****

****arigatÅ• - thank you****

****oji - uncle****

14. Chapter 14: Feeding Time

Disclaimer: I don't own Naruto, How To Train Your Dragon, or the cover art. All rights go to their original creators._

* * *

><p>AN:**

****HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE!****

****Thank you to all those who have read, reviewed, followed, or favorited my story! It means the world to me! I really try to reply to every review left for this story. I value your opinions and ideas, so please let me know if there is anyone I missed other than those who I had no way of replying to. If you are an anonymous reviewer or one that does not have an account capable of PMs, let me know if you wish me to answer a question and I will do so in an Author's Note like this one.****

****So, on to other business. I finally managed to fully outline this story's main plot and sub-plots! Hopefully things will go more smoothly now with my writing. That being said, please be patient.****

****On a side note, if any of you are interested I found a picture on DeviantArt of a young Naruto that absolutely tugs at my heartstrings. It's called 'Little Naruto', by Olggah. I don't know how old he is in this picture, but this is almost exactly how I imagined him after Hiccup and the other riders first freed him.****

****Lastly, my wonderful reviewer, Trilose, has requested that I put the English translation next to all Japanese or Norwegian word for easier reading. The reason I originally had the translations at the end of each chapter was because I felt they interrupted the flow of**

the story. Also, it was a way to have readers empathize more with the characters and their struggle to overcome the language barrier. However, now that the majority of the dialogue is in one language, there will be fewer translations to do. I will try out Trilose's idea during this chapter, and please be sure to let me know what you think of it.**

Well, I think that concludes the business stuff, so let's get on with the story!

* * *

><p>The moment Naruto and Hiccup stepped away from the blacksmith's hut and toward the village's hub of activity, the boy felt fear and nervousness gnaw and bite at his stomach. They hadn't been spotted by the other vikings. Yet. But Naruto dreaded the eyes of the crowd. He'd grown up beneath the stares of strangers all his life, being the son of the Hokage will cause that, but they had never felt so daunting or heavy.<p>

Unconsciously, he shifted closer to Hiccup's side, taking comfort in the chieftain's presence. The man reacted by placing a warm hand on the boy's head and ruffling the blond hairs. Naruto grinned at the familiar gesture, Hiccup's palm momentarily feeling just like his father's. The dragons also seemed aware of his anxiety. Toothless loomed up to his side, pushing his large scaly head beneath the boy's fingers whilst looking at him with luminous green eyes.

"Toothless protect hatchling. Safe. No more worry." Naruto smiled and scratched behind a black ear flap, inducing a happy, slack jawed reaction from the reptile.

"Thank you, Toothless." Picking up on some unheard signal, Kone also drew closer to the dragon child, wrapping himself tightly around the slim shoulders in a form of living armor. "You too, Kone." Though there was no reply to his words, Naruto felt comforted.

"Okay, I think this is far enough."

"Huh?" Naruto turned to see Hiccup astride the black dragon, slipping his prosthetic into the metal contraption on the saddle's side.

"Wh-what?"

"Toothless here tends to cause a bit of a back draft. Now that we don't have to worry about blowing the forge over, we can fly to the Dragon Hangar." The words tumbled around Naruto's mind, familiar yet still foreign. He latched onto what he could understand.

"Wait, fly?" Hiccup nodded.

"If that's okay." The man motioned to the busy villagers not too far away. "Then we don't have to walk through there." Young as he may be, Naruto was observant. He knew Hiccup understood his anxiety around the vikings, and felt gratitude swell in his heart. Until it was time to return home, Naruto knew he was safe, right here, right now.

"Okay."

In a moment he was tucked between Hiccup's chest and the Night Fury's head, with Kone cradled in his arms. Naruto knew he'd flown on Toothless before, once, after being freed from Drago's hideout. But, having been nearly unconscious at the time meant a lack of memories of the event. Now, wide awake, excitement thrummed within him as they took off.

It felt similar to flying on Kurama, though more sharp, extreme even. A height that took the Ancestral a single beat of massive wings to reach took several in quick succession from the Night Fury. And the tug that wished to pull him back to the ground seemed stronger and more intense. Naruto felt a laugh bubble up within him and escape, ringing out into the air along with a joyous shout. He watched gleefully as the landscape passed by, trees and homes zipping past as Toothless flew over and away from the village.

After doing a single circle over the island, they swooped down towards a large building clinging to the edge of the cliffside at the far end. Toothless glided through the large doors, landing gracefully in the center of the massive wooden structure. He tilted his head back to look at Naruto, a distinctly pleased look on his scaled features. Giggling, Naruto threw his skinny arms around the Night Fury's head, squashing Kone within the hug, who let out an indignant squawk and wriggled furiously. Moving back, Naruto let go of Toothless and patted Kone, soothing the rumpled creature with a few well placed scratches. Hiccup chuckled as he helped Naruto off the dragon, the Night Fury stooping low for the child.

"Down you go...there. Now, let's go see what we can find for your hungry friend." Taking the blond boy's hand, Hiccup gestured to the space around them. "_Velkommen_ (Welcome) to the Hangar, Naruto." The golden head spun back and forth as Naruto took in the new scene. The sights, the smells, and the sounds. The acridness of dragon's breath along with the stench of fish swirled in the air as dragons of all shapes, sizes, colors, and features flitted through the area. Toothless bounded over to a large tub full of fresh fish, one of many scattered throughout the room, and after leaping off Naruto's shoulder, Kone joined him. Looking further at the other dragons, Naruto recognized a few from his frightening encounter earlier in the village. Tugging Hiccup's hand, he pointed over to the three creatures.

"They're good dragons."

"Huh?" The chieftain questioned.

"They protected me from the scary villagers. Before the nice one-handed man helped me find you." Hiccup looked over to the three reptiles and placed a fist to his chin, his face thoughtful.

"Hmm" he glanced down at Naruto then pointed to the dragon furthest to the left. "That is _Juvel_ (Jewel), she is a _DÃ,delig Nadder _ (Deadly Nadder). Next to her is Frell, she's a _Hinkegrynte (_Hobblegrunt). And that last girl is Ember, a _MonstrÃ,se Mareritt (_Monstrous Nightmare)." The names made Naruto's head swim, but he smiled happily at the dragons taking in their appearance and behavior.

The Deadly Nadder bounced happily between large troughs of fish,

never still for more than a brief moment, her mottled blue and yellow scales flashing. The Hobblegrunt seemed timid, shy even, delicately grooming her yellow and green spotted frills. The Monstrous Nightmare paced back and forth, eyeing the other dragons as keeping order among them, her lithe scarlet body alert yet composed.

"Would you like to meet them?" The question startled Naruto at first, but only needed a second for further thought before nodding excitedly. The two began making their way towards the three creatures, stopping now and again to dodge around other dragons. There were few vikings in the Hangar, but those who were had taken notice and stopped their work to watch. Hiccup stopped several paces away from the three reptiles and motioned for Naruto to continue onward.

"I trust you," he spoke with a grin, his simple words boosting the child's confidence immeasurably. The blond-haired boy turned to Ember first, sensing her as the more dominant of the three. Kurama had taught him well, after all, to gain the trust of several dragons, first gain the trust of those they respect. Naruto slowed his pace until he was a short distance from the Monstrous Nightmare, who had turned blazing yellow eyes towards him. He remained relaxed, shifting his body slightly to a more open, exposed, position and crooned deep within his throat.

The effect was instantaneous. Ember's pupil's widened and she bent her enormous head to sniff deeply at the child, her hot breath ghosting over his face. Recognition dawned in her eyes and she gave a rumbling croon in return, nuzzling the little boy before her. Muttering broke out among the witnessing villagers and Naruto turned to see Hiccup smiling proudly at him. The child moved his gaze back to the creatures and stepped towards the hyper Nadder. Jewel watched him in bright curiosity and eagerly smelled the hand he presented to her and giving it a slobbery, wet lick. He grimaced and wiped his hand on his trousers before looking to the last of the trio.

Frell had held back, unsure and wary, her scales morphing to a pale pinkish-red. Naruto frowned, sensing an unusual amount of fear coming from the frilled reptile.

"Why are you so scared," he murmured more to himself than anyone. Something caught his eye, and he squinted to get a better look. Previously unnoticed scars traced silvery outlines along her left leg and wing, twisting around the limbs. "Hiccup?" he called over his shoulder, never taking his eyes off the marks. "What happened to her." A pause answered him for a moment, before the chieftain spoke a single word.

"Drago." Both dragon and child shuddered at the word. Wide slitted eyes swung to the boy upon seeing the mutual reaction. Naruto gazed sadly at Frell as he lifted the edge of his borrowed tunic, displaying the scars that had yet to fade along his torso.

"He got me too." Slowly, the Hobblegrunt crept forward, eyes fixed on the revealed wounds. As Frell sniffed him, Naruto continued to speak quietly. "He hurt my friend and me. He locked me up for a really long time. I was really scared. But Hiccup and Toothless and the others saved me and Kurama. We're safe now because of them. I-I don't have to be scared anymore." A single droplet fell on the dragon's scales, now mottled with spots of purple and blue, and the dragon leaned in

to give mutual comfort. Naruto wiped his eyes, not wanting to deal with more tears. He patted the eased creature at his side.

"See? We're okay. We-" A barrage of loud yells, roars, and other sounds cut through the peace, severely startling the dragons and vikings. Hiccup rushed to the source of the sound around the corner and Naruto heard him yell in surprise. Pandemonium broke loose in the Hangar as a Monstrous Nightmare burst through the doorway, skin blazing with flames that licked hungrily at its scales. The purple and blue dragon scramble in circles, obviously panicked. Backed into a nervous Frell, with Ember and Jewel flanking him, Naruto tried to pick out what he could from the garbled mess of accented words that were being shouted.

"Det er en av Valka er villdyr!" (It's one of Valka's wild beast's)

"Skold skremte darn ting!" (Skold startled the darn thing!)

"Stoppe den fÃ¸r den nÃr landsbyen!" (Stop it before it reaches the village!)

"TOOTHLESS!" At his rider's call, the black dragon leapt in front of the charging Nightmare, snarling and growling. The Nightmare ignored the Night Fury in favor of running, turning and heading straight for the blond-haired boy, who froze. Abruptly, mental images began pouring into his mind, forming a plan.

"Naruto, when say now, I need you to roar."

"W-what?" Shocked by Kurama's sudden words and thoughts in his head, Naruto could hardly process what was happening.

"**"Just do it!"** The boy nodded and looked ahead to see the Monstrous Nightmare nearly upon him, Naruto ducked beneath three dragons who had clustered protectively around him. He stood upright, dug his feet firmly into the ground and inhaled deeply, waiting for Kurama's signal.

"**"NOW!"** Just as the rampaging dragon reached him, Naruto released his breath in a wild roar that shook his body to its very center. He could feel chakra thrumming through his veins as Kurama's power pulsed through him, emanating through his voice in ever expanding waves. The Nightmare stopped in its tracks, looking startled beyond belief. The other dragons and viking reacted similarly, all wide-eyed and open mouthed, staring in surprise at the small child.

Naruto's jaw cracked as the roar ended and he huffed heavily as he sought to catch his breath.

"Thanks, Kurama."

"You're welcome, hatchling. I know you have questions, but they must wait until you get here to be answered."

"Okay." Naruto let the mental link drop and turned just in time to be swept into a fierce embrace by Hiccup, before the two of them were tackled by Frell, who sniffed and nuzzled at him worriedly.

"Oh gods, Naruto, oh gods," the man whispered breathlessly. "I thought...I thoughtâ€|oh gods!" Naruto kept silent, only hugging the man harder as he understood the unspoken words. A rubbing sensation against his lower legs signaled the return of Kone, who promptly fluttered to his perch on Naruto's shoulders and refused to budge. Wrapped as he was in arms, wings, and heat, Naruto felt a little smothered. But he accepted the affection, needing it as much as they did.

Hiccup finally pulled away from the embrace, stepping back to look over Naruto, checking for injuries.

"Are-are you alright?" he asked, sounding unsure and still shaken. Naruto nodded.

"Kurama helped me. I'm fine now." The young chieftain's brow wrinkled in confusion.

"Oh, okay. Well, I guess we should get Kurama's food then, huh?" The blond boy took the proffered hand, letting himself be led further into the Dragon Hangar followed by not only Toothless, but Frell, Ember, and Jewel as well. As they walked past the now calm Monstrous Nightmare Hiccup glanced down at Naruto.

"So, what does Kurama like? Fish? Chicken?"

"No chicken or fish, he always says they're annoying, but he'd like rocks. Big ones!"

"O-okay, then let's-"

"And he likes plants, and wood, and water, and-"

"Woah, woah, woah, slow down." Hiccup watched the bouncing boy, wide-eyed. "I mean, what does he like to eat?" Naruto pouted.

"I just told you," he whined. Hiccup held up a hand, placatingly.

"Alright, his food just sound...different from other dragons." The child wrinkled his nose.

"Why?"

"Well, most dragons with sharp teeth like Kurama's eat fish or meatâ€|" He trailed off, upon seeing the boy shaking his head.

"Kurama doesn't eat with his teeth, they're just for fighting." Hiccup appeared incredibly confused.

"Then...how does he eat?" Naruto grinned mischievously.

"You'll see!"

A short time later, the two of them had finally reached Kurama's field, both carrying large baskets full of an assortment of rocks, leaves, twigs, logs, flowers, and sticks that Naruto had hand picked. The boy lit up in a smile upon seeing the massive red creature,

dropping his basket to run to his friend. Hiccup chuckled in amusement, thinking back on reunions of his own in times past. He set down the wicker creel, groaning at the weight and wishing he hadn't left Toothless back at the Hanger to deal with the other dragons. He turned to find two pairs of blood-red and sky-blue eyes watching him. Hiccup gulped, the intimidation of the Ancestral's stare still high.

"Lord Kurama," he bowed

"**"Human Alpha,"** the dragon replied, surprising Hiccup with his address. "I see that my hatchling is no worse for wear after his moment earlier." The viking cringed, recalling the terror that had flooded through him when he watched the rampaging Nightmare head for the boy.

"Naruto said it was you who saved him." The red-scaled head nodded.

"I spoke to the other dragon through my connection to the hatchling. The Flamehide should not give you any more trouble."

"Thank you, I think."

"Do not mention it, really, don't. I rarely give favors, and I've yet to bestow one upon your kind."

"My...kind?"

"**"There is a reason those of the East call your people Baikingu (viking). It's a reference to the style of meal you tend to favor."** Hiccup couldn't stop the twitch of his lip at the comment.

"Yeah, vikings are known for their stubbornness, not their table manners."

"**"Perhaps, but on to other things. Naruto, will you assist me?"** The child nodded eagerly.

"Which ones do you want to use?"

"Hm, use the three element formation." Both dragon and viking watched as Naruto gathered three items from the creel baskets; a stone, a twig, and a vial of water. Hiccup gazed in curiosity as Naruto drew a triangle in the plowed soil and set the uncorked water vial at the top corner, the stone to the left corner, and the twig to the right corner. Using his finger the boy began drawing in the dirt once more, creating a unique pattern in the dust at the center of the triangle. Hiccup looked on as a swirling circular symbol came into being, surrounded by a ring of scrawling writing that extended out into eight lines. Between the lines lay five _ and two more lines of script. Hiccup marveled at the detail of the picture, and wondered how Naruto could have garnered such a skill.

**_"Well done, hatchling. Your practice has paid off."_ **Naruto beamed at his companion.

"Is it good enough to work?"

"Yes. Now, stand back." Both Naruto and Hiccup moved back several paces to give the dragon more room. The chieftain watched with growing fascination as Kurama extended a clawed limb over the items. He gasped as a glow began to emanate from the tip of each lethal point, enveloping the water, stone, and branch. Hiccup noticed a change beginning in the objects as they started to react to the strange light. The water began to boil, the stone began to crack, the twig began to dry and shrivel up. The changes continued, speeding up until only an empty vial and two piles of brown-grey dust were left.

Mouth agape, Hiccup stared at the boy and his dragon. Naruto smiled and a smirk was barely perceptible on Kurama's lips. The boy stood proudly with a fist on each hip and his small chest puffed out.

"Told you he didn't use his teeth!"

* * *

><p>AN: Short chapter, I know. **

15. Chapter 15: A Symbol of Friendship

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><p>AN:**

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE READING THIS! Thank you for giving me over 240 reviews, over 400 favorites, over 450 followers, and over 50,000 views! You all are so wonderful!**

The top result for the poll is...the Dragon Blade from Naruto Shippuden: Dragon Blade Chronicles! I absolutely love this sword and definitely intend to use it in this story.**

As I mentioned in replies to a few of you, Naruto is going to have multiple offense based weapons, along with more defense based equipment as well. I'm going to take all votes into consideration, but just remember that I do need to pick the weapons that will work best with the story line and world. He isn't necessarily going to be a weapons master, but he will be well rounded in his over-all skills and abilities.

Thanks for voting everyone! And thanks for all the suggestions for weapons.

Alright, I think that's it for now. On with the story!

* * *

><p>"Told you he didn't use his teeth!"<p>

Naruto's proud declaration hung on the air for a moment as Hiccup

stared, eyes bulging and mouth wide open. The blond-haired boy continued grinning until the viking's unchanging expression began to worry him.

Naruto turned to the Ancestral. "I think I broke him."

The fiery-red beast shook his head. _** "No, he's merely lost his senses."**_

"But that's what I just said!"

**"Sure, hatchling."**

They watched as Hiccup suddenly shook his head and blinked rapidly. "D-did you justâ€¦"

"Uhuh!"

"And he justâ€¦"

**"Yes."**

The viking stared wide-eyed for a moment longer before muttering quietly. "Oh."

"Hiccup?" the boy chirped.

"Hm?"

"Did I break you?"

"Noâ€¦" The man looked at him in confusion. "Why would you think that?"

"Well, that's how Mommy and Daddy looked when we first showed them stuff like this, and Grandpa Jiraiya would always laugh and say that I'd broken them."

"W-well, I mean, I was really surprised but I don't think I'm, er, broken."

"Good! I'd be really sad if I broke my first viking friend. It's rude to break people you know."

Hiccup exchanged an amused glance with the Ancestral dragon. "Yes, very rude. Now, care to explain to me what just happened?"

"Kurama ate!"

Hiccup pinched the bridge of his nose. "It's not everyday that I see something like this, bud. You're going to have to be more specific."

**"I drew raw energy, chakra, from the items. Naruto drew a special seal in order to assist me in my feeding. I am a creature created from pure energy, I do not need to eat like other dragons must."**

"You, you sucked the life out of those things?"

"Not in the way you are thinking. Yes, I harvested the chakra, but not all of it. There is still some left. Just enough for what I intend."

"May I ask what that would be?"

"I think you ought to look to the hatchling for that answer."

Hiccup glanced over at the boy who shyly scuffed his foot in the dirt.

"Last night, um, when Kurama and I were talking I asked him to make something special for you. You and Astrid and those other people saved us, so I wanted to give you a present." He turned to the Ancestral. "So, now what do I do?"

The dragon groaned.**_ "Combine the piles, hatchling."_**

Hiccup watched in curiosity as Naruto began sweeping the three piles of brown-grey dust together, gathering it in the center of the triangular drawing. Once again the dragon raised a clawed appendage over the seal. Brilliant white light flashed abruptly, far brighter than last time. When the shine faded, the two males gazed at the dragon, who cupped something within his massive talons. Naruto bounced on his toes in obvious excitement.

"Is it ready? Is it done? Can I give it to him now?"

**"Yes, hatchling."** Naruto eagerly and fetched the item from Kurama and hurried back over to Hiccup.

"Close your eyes! And no peeking!" Hiccup smiled and let his eyes slide shut, holding out his open hands. He felt a cool, dense weight drop into his palms along with a sort of thread that hung over his fingers.

"Can I look now?"

"Yup!"

Hiccup blinked down at the object he held; a pale, blue-grey, circular stone as wide as his palm and covered with inscriptions on either side. Hiccup recognized the carving as the same leaf-like emblem that had been written both on Naruto's scroll and his map. A thin, plant-like cord looped through a hole molded into the top of the medallion.

Hiccup looked back to the boy, "Naruto?" The child's smile wavered nervously. "Is this the symbol of your home?"

"Uh huh," came the reply. "It's called the Kamon no Konoha, the Emblem of Konoha. And, um, If you wear it then anyone from Konoha will know you're my friend. Daddy told me it's a way to make all-alli-allia...those really important friendships between important people.

"An alliance?" Hiccup asked.

"Yeah, that thing. Do you like it?"

Hiccup smiled at him, "I love it. Thank you, Naruto. Can you help me put it on?"

Satisfied that his gift had been well received, the boy returned to his happy, bouncy self, eagerly assisting Hiccup in tying the cord around his neck so the medallion hung at the center of his chest. A moment later, when Naruto became distracted by a bird singing nearby, Hiccup whispered to Kurama.

"I get the feeling that there's more to this stone than what Naruto said."

"Indeed. By presenting you with that Kamon, Naruto has practically adopted you into his family. He is a descendant of two high ranking individuals, one of whom was technically the heir to an entire nation, while the other was the leader of one of the greatest military strongholds in the East. When you wear that emblem, you are proclaiming yourself a part of this heritage. Only Naruto or one of his parents are allowed to bestow such an honor. Use it wisely, human."

"But why? Why me? I don't understand." Hiccup tugged at his hair in frustration.

"I don't completely understand it myself, but I can only assume that Naruto has decided to trust you implicitly. No small thing, considering what he has been through. For now, we will wait and see what the future holds."

The dragon abruptly stopped and looked to the sky. **_"Hm, it appears our conversation will have to continue at some other time. Your mate is arriving."_**

"Huh?" Hiccup shaded his eyes against the sun and looked up. He grinned at seeing the familiar silhouette. Hiccup jogged over to his fiancée as the Deadly Nadder landed and she dismounted. "Hello there, m'lady. How have the winds been for you?"

Astrid laughed. "As fair as ever, oh great chieftain." She turned to Kurama and gave a short bow. "Hello, Lord Kurama."

The dragon nodded back and smirked at Hiccup. **_"Keep a close hold on this one, human. She's good for you."_** Hiccup blushed and began stammering, while Astrid looked on in confused amusement. She slugged him on the shoulder, rather gently, all things considered.

"Where's our little 'dragon whisperer' run off to?" Hiccup rubbed his sore limb and pointed across the field.

"Over there. I think he's chasing a butterfly." The two of them smiled fondly as they watched the child gleefully running through the field. "I think he's happy to finally be outside and away from the village."

"I don't blame him. I'm surprised at how far he's come, actually. He's adjusted a lot faster than I thought he would."

Hiccup nodded, "Yeah. But I think that it's a part of who he is, nothing seems to keep him down for long." He glanced over at her.

"Anyways, how did you know where we were?"

Astrid grinned. "Your mom told me. She's been playing 'peacemaker' over at the Hangar. You two left quite the mess behind."

Hiccup cringed. "Oops?" Astrid rolled her eyes. "Hey, at least I left Toothless there! And Kone, too." He added as an afterthought. His fiance snorted.

"He's nearly as bad as Barf and Belch. They had already broken into one of the extra fish stores when I left. I swear, the gods made that dragon way too smart." Try as he might, Hiccup couldn't prevent the grin that spread over his face, earning him a second punch on the shoulder.

"I take that back, he's worse than them. He's as bad as you." Hiccup opened his mouth to retort, but was cut off by a happy shout.

"Hiccup! Look!" The two vikings turned to see Naruto run up to them with something held gingerly in his hands. "I caught it!" Resting in his palm lay a butterfly, slowly fluttering its wings, completely calm and unharmed. Astrid leaned down to look closer.

"It's beautiful, Naruto." The boy grinned.

"Yup! But she has to go home now." As if understanding the boy's words the butterfly flew off his palm and back into the field. A strange rumbling sound caught their attention. Naruto giggle sheepishly and held his stomach. "My tummy misses food."

Astrid and Hiccup laughed, the brown-haired man scooping the boy up onto his shoulders.

"Then I guess we'd better go take care of it." The three of them said goodbye to Kurama and mounted Stormfly, quickly flying over to the Mead Hall at the village center. As they landed they could already hear loud laughter and shouts through the heavy wooden doors. Astrid placed an arm around Naruto's shoulders after seeing him tensing at the raucous noises.

"Are you okay?"

He shook his head. "I'm scared. I-I know I shouldn't be but I can't help it." Astrid knelt, stooping down to look the boy in the eyes.

"Naruto, It's hard to face something you're scared of. But you've got to have confidence in yourself. You're Naruto Uzukaze, the boy with the soul of a dragon. I believe in you." The child's eyes grew wider with each word she spoke, filling with amazement. Astrid smiled at him. "Besides, Hiccup and I would never let anything happen to one of our precious people."

Naruto gasped. "You m-mean, I'm...you...me? Really?" The viking woman nodded, causing the boy to smile brightly. He threw small arms around her and squeezed tightly, elation coursing through him when she returned the embrace. They separated a moment later and Astrid moved to clasp Naruto's left hand while Hiccup held the other.

"Ready?"

Naruto nodded. "Yes!" Hiccup caught his fiance's eye and mouthed a thank you. She smiled in return. Turning to the massive wooden doors of the Hall, they pushed forward and entered.

The scent of seasoned meats and fresh breads mingled with the laughter and shouting in the air. The villagers sat all through the hall, sprawled over tables, chairs, and even floor, the firelight gleaming off metal and shined leather. The three newcomers took a seat at one of the farthest table, skirting the crowds. They remained unnoticed at first. Shortly after they began to eat, however, the sharp eyes of one viking scholar observed them.

"Chief," Hiccup looked up to see Fishlegs standing in front of their table and holding a plate piled high with food. "Can I join you?"

The chieftain turned to the boy at his side, nestled between himself and Astrid. "Is that okay with you, Naruto?"

The child gazed at Fishlegs for a moment before nodding with a shy smile. The heavyweight viking sat across from them and quickly tucked into his meal. Not long after Fishlegs joined them, two hands slammed down on the table, startling the vikings and causing Naruto to jump in fright. Snotlout grinned at their reaction.

"Hiccup!"

The man in question groaned. "What is it, Snotlout?"

The burly viking crossed his arms and glared down at the brunet. "Oy, where have you been? Ever since shorty over here," he gestured to the frightened child, "came, you've hardly been seen around the village. What's up with that?"

Despite his trepidation, Naruto managed to pout. "M'not short," he mumbled.

Snotlout scoffed. "Ha! Your even smaller than Hiccup was-"

"I resent that," Hiccup interjected.

"-And that means you're short, shorty!" the raven haired viking finished proudly.

Seeing Naruto's dejected expression, Astrid stood and slammed her fist onto the wooden tabletop. "Enough, Snotlout. Leave him alone."

"Why should I?" He pointed a finger at the child's face. "I want to know who he is and where he's from. I still don't believe a dragon like that red one belongs to someone like him."

"He's our guest, Snotlout." Hiccup glared at his cousin, standing as well. "And have you forgotten that we just rescued him from a madman's hideout two days ago?"

"So? He's obviously fine! I mean, look at him!" He waved towards

Naruto who shrank further into his seat.

"That's it!" With a battle cry, Astrid leapt at Snotlout, tackling him to the floor. The arrogant viking soon lay immobilized on the floor, caught with both arms locked and her knee pressing into his back.

"Apologize, now."

"Ack! No!"

"Apologize!"

"Urk! Never!"

"I'm warning you, Snotlout."

"Fine!" he strained to turn his head towards the blond-haired boy.
"Hmph. Sorry."

"Good." Astrid stood with the man still in her hold before dropping him abruptly. The man let out a cry as his nose slammed into the floor.

She moved back, dusting off her hands and brushing a stray lock of hair from her face. "Piece of cake." She turned to look at Naruto and saw a goofy expression, somewhere between glee and awe, spread across his face.

"Wow," he whispered. "Cool."

Hiccup chuckled, "I couldn't agree more." Astrid smirked and returned to her seat, ruffling Naruto's hair as she passed him.

"Anything for the chance to knock some sense into that idiot." Said idiot grumbled as he sat up from his place on the floor.

"Geez, Astrid. Why do you always do that?"

"Because you always get on my nerves," she replied tersely. "And don't even think of sitting by us unless your going to be nice to him."

"Fine," he gave them a wide berth, flopping down near the far end of the table. "I was just joking around, you know."

Hiccup shook his head. "Now isn't the place for that kind of joke, 'Lout. Save that for the other vikings."

"Like you?"

The chieftain sighed, "Not really what I was going for. So, no. Not if Naruto's around."

"Why does he get special treatment?"

Hiccup wrapped an arm around the child. "Because he's special. Something I was hoping to tell the other villagers later, which means," he stared hard at Snotlout. "You need to gather the adults for a meeting tonight."

"But," Snotlout whined. "Why me?"

"Because, you volunteered.

"What?" The man threw his arms into the air. "When did I do that?"

Hiccup smirked, "Just now, so, I'll see you later."

"Hmph. See if I care." Snotlout stood and walked off, stomping loudly and muttering under his breath. Hiccup looked down at Naruto.

"Sorry about him. My cousin tends to be really rude.

Fishlegs, who had until now remained silent with Snotlout present, spoke up. "I think that would be considered an understatement, Hiccup."

"Understatement of the year, more like it." Astrid quipped.

"He has some good moments, I think." His fiance shook her head.

"Whatever you say."

"Anyways," Hiccup continued. "You won't have to worry too much about him, we'll make sure he leaves you alone."

"Um, will Astrid fight him again?"

"If I need to, why?"

Naruto smile shyly, yet they could still see a definite undertone of mischievousness. "Cause it was awesome. It was just like when I used to watch Kakashi and Obito spar back in Konoha!"

Fishlegs perked up at the foreign words. "Konoha?"

Naruto nodded, "My home. Daddy was the strongest shinobi in the whole village! That's why he was Hokage."

Hiccup answered Fishlegs' next question before he could ask it. "Shinobi are the warrior or soldiers of his homeland, and the Hokage was like their chieftain."

"But how do you know all this? And I thought he didn't know our language."

"Naruto and Kurama explained it, and buddy here happens to be a very fast learner." The child beamed at his words.

"Wait, Kurama? As in the dragon?"

"Yeah, I know it's hard to understand, but Kurama is one of the oldest dragons in existence. And unlike any dragon we've seen around Berk, he can talk."

The blond man's eyes bulged. "Wh-what? How?"

"He's apparently one of the original dragons, an Ancestral, as they call themselves. All the other dragons are their descendants."

"But, how is that possible? He would have to be hundreds of years old!"

They turned to Naruto when he giggled. "He's actually about a thousand years old." This time both Hiccup and Fishlegs wore expression of shock.

"Oh," the chieftain mumbled, unable to find anything better to say. Astrid rolled her eyes at the state of the two men.

"I'm going to talk to my family about something, I'll be right back."

After Astrid left, Naruto tugged on Hiccup's sleeve. "I'm done eating. Is it time to do dishes now?"

Hiccup chuckled. "Some of the village children have that assignment. I do have something in mind that I need help with, though."

"What is it? Can I help? Please?"

"Well, I need to tell the village council about where you're from and more about Kurama. All they know at this point is how we rescued you. I'm not going to ask you to come with me, but would you help me make some drawings for the meeting?"

"Drawings of what?" Naruto questioned.

"Let's go back to the hut and I'll tell you." Hiccup turned to Fishlegs. "Will you let Astrid know where we went? Then maybe help Snotlout let the others know about the meeting."

"Sure, chief." They smiled at the title, both still getting used to the idea of Hiccup being leader of Berk.

"Thanks," he patted Naruto's back and led him towards the doors. They stepped out into the cooling air of the evening and made their way through the hushed village. The few villagers they passed hailed their chief and waved to the boy beside him. Feeling more confident, Naruto managed a small wave in return, bringing a smile to Hiccup's face.

"Um, Hiccup?" Naruto whispered just as they reached the chieftain's hut.

"Hm?" The brown-haired man met the boy's eyes. The child abruptly threw his arms around Hiccup's waist.

"_Arigato, _Hiccup_. Arigato." Gently tugging on his arms, the man removed Naruto's arms and knelt down to embrace him.

"You're welcome, Naruto."

* * *

><p>AN:**

****I think this is one of my favorite chapters. :)****

16. Chapter 16: Feelings and Fears

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><p>AN:**

****It's finally here! Chapter 16! ****

****Credit and thanks to ILikeReading1 and Dragon. Heart. 0 (pretend the are no spaces in the name, the site won't let me put it in otherwise) for helping with this chapter. :D****

****On another note, this story passes the 50,000 word mark in this chapter! It has taken much longer to reach this point than I had originally anticipated. Mainly due to a series of unfortunate events occurring in my day to day reality. Yeah, anyways, I don't exactly know where this story will go. At this point, I am currently in the middle of writing four different stories, including this one. Call me crazy, but this is how my brain works. So, my apologies for the slow updates, and thank you for your patience.****

* * *

><p>The next few days passed in contented peace, the Vikings rebuilding their home while the new residents settled in further. After overcoming his initial fear of the villagers, Naruto had taken it upon himself to befriend as many of them as he possibly could. When Hiccup asked Kurama about it, the ancient being had believed it likely due to the boy's upbringing, stating that not only were his parents notoriously friendly people but due to the child's status many of his peers had been intimidated by the bright little boy.<p>

During his meeting with the villagers, Hiccup had explained both Naruto's and Kurama's presence on the island, along with specific details of their lives previous to arriving. He left out mentions of Naruto's abilities, wanting to wait until the boy himself revealed them to the other Vikings. Hiccup still marveled at the boy's bright mind. Watching the child learn and grow became his favorite pastime, second only to flying with Toothless. Naruto also became close friends to Gobber, and the two blonds were frequently seen tinkering in the forge and playing with the dragons.

However, the most surprising change occurred with Astrid. Many of the villagers were stunned when they first witnessed the maiden's motherly tenderness towards the boy. It had begun one day when Astrid and Naruto were walking through the village, heading towards the Dragon Hangar to meet Hiccup. The blond-haired child had spotted something and run off to investigate, returning with tightly clutched hands. He had presented Astrid with a single newly bloomed flower that had somehow managed to find life in the densely packed soil of the island. To the surprise of those watching, Astrid had beamed from ear to ear and hugged the boy tightly, pressing a kiss to his

forehead in a show of emotion that they rarely witnessed.

Whispers began spreading through the village as more scenes of tenderness and care were seen between the two blonds. Astrid herself knew about the questioning glances and hushed conversations, but couldn't find it in herself to care. She loved her time with Naruto and adored each and every precious moment they had shared. A small wish began to grow within her. She knew that one day Naruto would need to return home, but she hoped that it wouldn't be soon.

"I'm going to get you!" Astrid growled playfully. Naruto shrieked in laughter as he ran from the blond Viking. She soon caught up to him, however, and hoisted the boy up, spinning around. "Caught ya!" Astrid began tickling him mercilessly and Naruto squirmed.

"No! No!" He laughed.

After a few more tickles, the two collapsed to the ground where they had been playing near the docks, waiting for the ships to return with their latest catch. Astrid stretched out in the evening sun with Naruto mirroring her actions. Inch by inch, the boy scooted closer until they were shoulder to shoulder.

"Astrid?" The child whispered.

"Hm?"

"Um, well...never mind."

Astrid sat up, leaning on one arm. "What is it, Naru?" The boy sat up as well but didn't speak. "Naruto?"

"I feel strange."

"Strange?"

"Uhuh. I think I'm too happy."

Her brows furrowed. "Why do you think that?"

"Cause, I'm having fun, but Mommy and Daddy aren't here. Why am I so happy when I'm not at home?"

Astrid marveled at the boy's insight. "Are you missing your home?"

He nodded. "Yeah, I want to go home. But I don't want to leave you, and Hiccup, and Toothless, and everyone else. I just wish Mommy and Daddy were here, too."

Astrid wrapped an arm around his shoulders. "Are you feeling happy and sad at the same time?"

"Uhuh."

"Well," Astrid leaned down. "We call that being homesick."

"Homesick?"

"Mhm. That's when you're sad because you miss being home."

"So I'm homesick? How do I get better? I don't like feeling sick."

The blond Viking smiled. "Well, what do you usually do when you feel sick?"

"Um, Granny Tsunade would give me medicine to help me feel better."

"Well, there's a medicine for homesickness, too. It's your memories."

Naruto wrinkled his nose. "Memories? How is that supposed to be medicine? You put medicine in your mouth, not your head."

Astrid chuckled. "Homesickness is different from other illnesses. You feel it in your heart and your head. So that's where the medicine goes."

"I don't get it."

"Well, when your body is sick, you give it medicine to help it feel better. When your heart is sick, it needs medicine, too. That medicine is love."

"Love?"

"Yup. The medicine for homesickness is made of three ingredients, the first one is memories. What was your favorite place back in Konoha?"

"Uh, I loved the garden by our house. Mommy would let me help her water the flowers. They were so pretty! I really like the red ones that matched Mommy's hair. And I liked Hokage Mountain. Daddy and I would go sit on the huge statues and eat food we snuck out of the house. Mommy always caught us, though."

Astrid nodded, "Ok, that's a good start. What else?"

Naruto thought for a moment. "I guess I liked the training grounds, especially number seven. Uncles Kashi and Obito, and Auntie Rin would teach me cool things. Like how to climb trees without your hands!"

The Viking blinked. "You could do that?" Astrid asked.

"Yeah!" Naruto grinned. "And they could walk on water, too! I wasn't very good at it. I always fell in and got super wet." He pouted.

"Uh, wow, ok. Um, what else?"

"I loved when we played the sneaking game! I would go hide in the trees and then they would come and try to find me. It was really hard, I had to be very quiet or else one of them would hear me."

"Is it like hide-and-go-seek?"

"Yeah, but much harder. While they tried to find me, I had to get the bells that Uncle 'Kashi would hide. If time ran out before I got them, or they found me first, I had to do chores with them. But if I got the bells then they would take me to go get ramen!"

"Ramen?"

"It's so yummy! It's my favorite food in the whole world!"

Astrid grinned. "I guess you'll need to teach us how to make it, then."

Starry blue eyes blinked at her. "Really?"

"Yup-oof"

The boy tackled her in a hug. "Yay!" He held on for a moment longer. "Astrid? Was that the medicine?"

"Just the first part. Now, the second ingredient is tears."

"But I don't want to cry."

"I know, but the tears we hold inside are part of what makes us feel homesick. In order to feel better, we need to let them out."

"How do I do that?"

"Instead of remembering happy memories like before, we remember sad ones."

Naruto frowned. "Like what?"

Astrid breathed deeply. "When was the last time you saw your parents?" She asked quietly.

"During the festival, when the bad men and dragons were hurting everyone. I tried to help, but I couldn't. I wasn't strong enough." His eyes began watering, and he sniffed. "Everyone was trying so hard to protect me, and they got hurt doing it. I...I don't want anyone to be hurt because of me." Tears cascaded down marked cheeks. "I want to get stronger to protect them." He sniffled. "I want Mommy and Daddy to be proud of me. I...I want Mommy and Daddy!" His tears overcame any further words and he burrowed himself into Astrid's arms. The blond Viking held him close as he cried.

After a time, his tears slowed. "What," he sniffed. "What's the third ingredient?"

"This," Astrid whispered. "Ingredient number three is a hug."

Astrid strode into the forge. Hiccup looked up from his work and smiled at her. "Hello, m'lady." He put down the metal tongs and wiped his hands on his leather apron.

"Hey," she greeted quietly.

Hiccup's eyebrows rose. "What's wrong?"

She shrugged. "What makes you think anything's wrong?"

Hiccup frowned. "That. Right there. I know you well enough to recognize that face and tone of voice." He wrapped an arm around her shoulders. "What is it?"

She sighed. "It's Naruto. We were talking and then I left him playing with Gobber because I...I just don't know what to do, Hic. He misses his home so much. I want to help him, but, I don't want him to leave. He's...special to me." She clenched her fists. "I feel so selfish, right now. I can't help but want to keep him here, but I know his parents must miss him."

"Astrid," Hiccup sighed. "Naruto is an orphan."

Her jaw fell. "What?"

Hiccup nodded. "Both his mom and dad were killed by the men who attacked his village. Naruto saw it, but I don't think it's really sunk in for him, yet."

Astrid's eyes watered. "So, what will he do?"

"I don't know. Kurama wishes for him to stay here for a while. I already promised that we would take care of him until he was ready to return home."

Astrid pondered this for several moments. She turned to Hiccup and wrapped her arms around his middle. "I guess this is what it's like, having kids, huh?"

He returned her embrace and laid his chin on her blond locks. "Yeah, I guess it is."

"Hiccup!" They separated at the shout. Hiccup looked at the blacksmith as he hobbled into the ramshackle forge followed closely by Naruto.

"Gobber? What's wrong?"

"Nothin' laddie but Johann just showed up at the docks. I thought ye ought ta' go down an' talk with 'im." Gobber paused, "I don't think he's 'eard abou' yore father, yet."

Hiccup sighed. "Yeah, I guess I should." He glanced at Naruto. "Hey, bud. Do you want to meet someone new, or go back to the hut?"

The blond-haired child shuffled his feet. "Um, I'd like to meet him." Hiccup nodded and took the boy's hand. Astrid moved to Naruto's other hand and grasped it as well. The four of them made their way to the newly rebuilt docks where a sizeable crowd had already gathered around the traveler. They arrived in time to hear Johann regaling the villagers with tales of his recent adventures.

"So, there I was! Surrounded on all sides by wreckage and flotsam, encircled about by the evidence of some poor man's defeat and destruction. I searched through the debris, looking for survivors." He shook his head. "What attacked these wayfaring souls? I asked myself. Dragons? Vagabonds? Pirates? Nay, for there was evidence of a much darker source."

Johann began to pace before the crowd. "For during my search I discovered one man still held onto life. He gasped and coughed blood as I hoisted him onto my own ship. Sadly he lived only moments longer. But he handed me the contents of his hand and whispered one word in my ear. I could hardly believe what he said. Yet, there, in my hand was the proof." The trader pulled something from his bag, a single, broken, spearhead.

"A Berserker weapon! The like that I have seen many times before!"

Hiccup elbowed his way through the crowd. "Hold on, Johann. The Berserkers have held a ceasefire for years, ever since Heather took over the tribe and Dagur was imprisoned."

Johann swept his comment off. "That's what we all believed. But the man, bless his soul, the last word on his lips was the name of his attacker. A single word...Dagur!" Gasps spread through the villagers standing around. He handed the broken spearhead to Hiccup, who began to examine it. The chieftain sighed.

"Well, it's definitely Berserker made. But how could Dagur be responsible for the destruction of an entire ship and the death of everyone on board."

Johann shrugged and spread his arms. "I haven't the foggiest idea, me, one of the greatest travelers of the Barbaric Archipelago, yet I cannot give you an explanation." He tapped the spearhead. "That's why I came here. I figured that if anyone could understand that man's mind, it would be you and your father. Speaking of which," he glanced around the village. "Where is the chief?"

Hiccup lowered his head. "I guess you haven't heard the news yet." The man turned and beckoned for Johann to follow. "Let's go to my home, we can speak privately there."

End
file.